



THE HAREM

AND OTHER POEMS



ALOYSIUS COLL



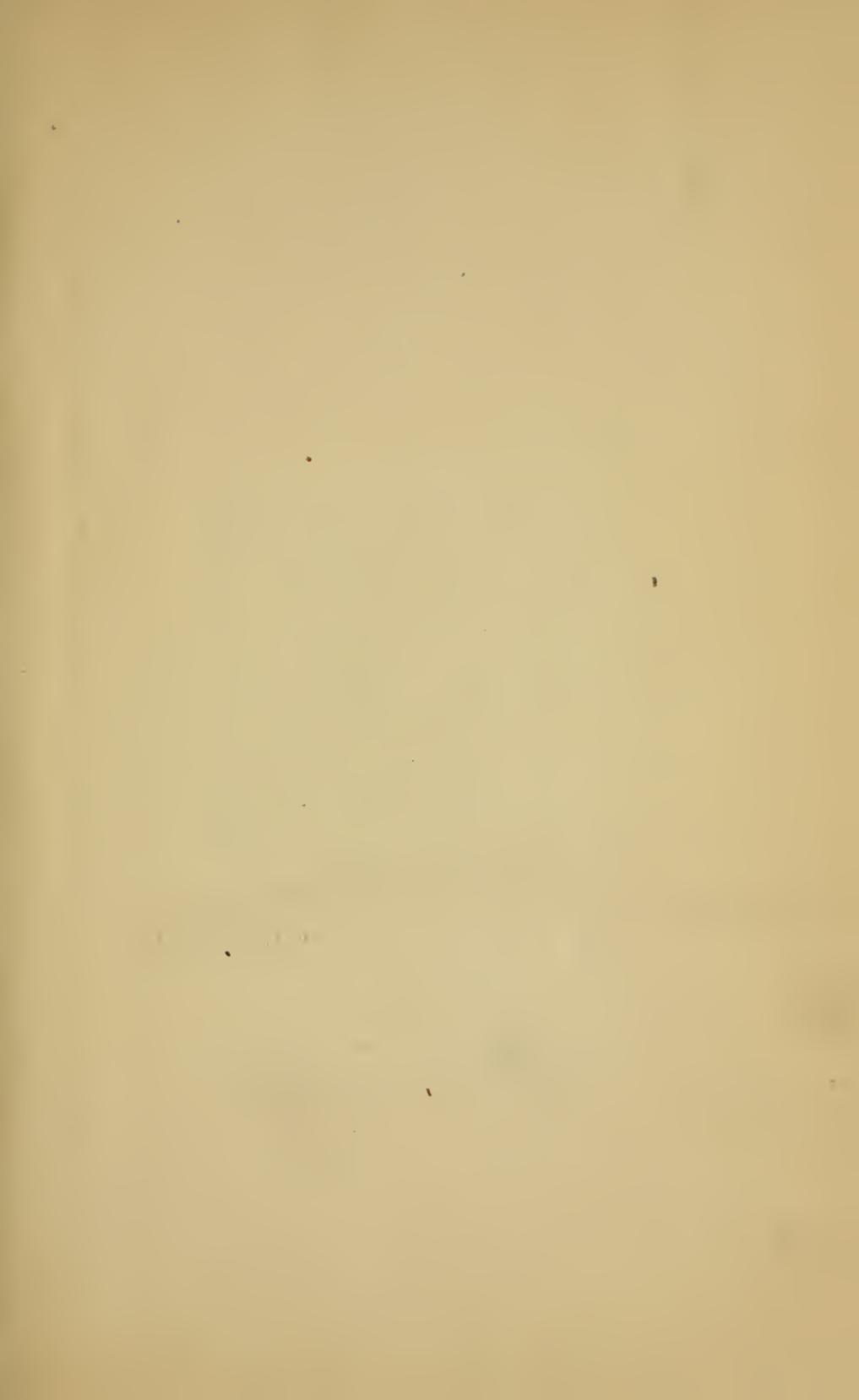


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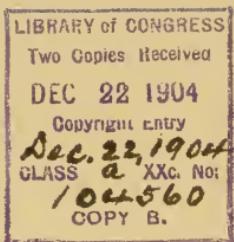


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ALOYSIUS COLL



Boston
RICHARD G. BADGER
The Gorham Press
1904



PS 3505
O 3 H 3
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*Printed at
The Gorham Press,
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A QUATERNION OF THE SERAGLIO

I

THE CHIEF BLACK EUNUCH

Master, I kiss thy feet! Thy will is done,
And fuller than thy wish. The circling realms
Are stripped of beauty, wit and youth for thy
Seraglio. Were the Holy Prophet come
Bride-seeking in this land of women fair,
And, finding none in wayside, market-place
And harem, did he ask: "Pray, tell me where
Assyria's beauties be," all men would say:
"Go beg from Ubsek out of Ishpahan!"
Within the triple walls of thy domain
The jetty hair of Egypt waits the stroke
Of thy indulgent hand. The full, red lips
Of Persia purse in liquid mockery
Of nightingales, sweet singing in the court.
A maiden from Morocco, strong and lithe,
Dances beneath a whirling scimiter
The while a shower of sunlight on the blade
Hallows her with a crown of golden flashes.
One, with her zither free upon her lap,
The twilight gives a voice melodious.
Another, Bacchus-tutored, shall delight
Thine eyes and palate in a mazy dance,
With grace the brimful goblets offering
Out of the swell and ebb of billowy silks.
But these are puppets in the arts of love
Matched with the witching twain that wait this
night
Thy godly face—their Mecca of Desire.
Either has woman's fairy power to mold
Thy every wish a sweet reality.
One is a maid Circassian, so young
And timorous that when the auctioneer,
To show her beauty in the market-place,

Unzoned the moving marble of her breast,
She swooned for modesty; whereat the cries
Of bidding eunuchs trebled and waxed wild
In golden competition. Hamid Bey,
Chief Eunuch for a Prince of Dehbala,
His shrill bids shouted over mine, until
I faltered 'tween the dizzy price that grew
And the despairing loss of such a prize—
I bid her in; I folded her away
From envious eyes; nor, Master, shall I fear
The koorbash when thou measurest the loss
Of all the gold I squandered with the gain
Of all the joys it purchased.—She is called
Roxana. She can sing and dance and play;
The nightingale is not more sweet of song,
And not so light of foot the butterfly.
If all the dreams of women fair were mixed
In earth's divinest countenance, some aid
From star and sun the picture would require
Ere it eclipse Roxana's loveliness;
But chiefest of her charms her willowy wit,
And wisdom trite. The Talmud is engraved
Deep on her mind's entablature. The songs
Of Sappho are as little links of gold
Binding her learning to her grace. She knows
The symbols of the mystical Kaballah.
She gives the Koran daily audience,
And chanting birds, and music of the brook.
Into her heart's affections shall she draw
Thy heart till thou art but her tenantry—
A wish dissolving in the wine of love!
Or, wouldst thou smother thought in revelry?—
Wouldst thou surrender Sultanship of soul
For passion's flying dervishry—Then let
That woman be thy minister who makes
Thy glance her soul, thy wish her only creed—
Zachi, thy wife, the full of breast and red
Of lip—the shepherdess of gamboling joys
On sunny quests outstraying—she that sleeps

The moments of thy absences away
That separation from thy side beseem
The shorter—she that rent thy house with moans
And slew a harmless slave the night I slipped
Thy new-bought bride from Persia to thy arms!
Zachi, who blushing hears with parted lips
And dreamy eyes, thy message: “Come, I wait!”
With golden languor so enrapt that once,
When I beheld thee in a dawn which broke
Alike the clasp of night, of her and thee,
I saw the smile of midnight lingering
Upon thy face, and, like a sun, upon
The plash of thy ablutions in the morning!
Which bride shall bear thy wooing, Master,—
which
When incense smokes the damask of thy chamber;
When window lattice trembles with the breath
Of jasmin and the soft-sung dreams of birds;
When ruby lamp burns low, and higher burns
The hidden torches of desire? Which,
Roxana, stout defender of her heart;
Or Zachi shall the night give up to thee
To win thee by persuasion and the soft
Witcheries of a woman’s full-blown love?

II

UBSEK

Thou sayest Roxana is in learning first
Of all my brides, and young and beautiful;
That she will fend her graces with her wit.
’Tis well; the key of knowledge shall I try
Her heart to open. Once within the high
Thick outer walls of her serene resolve,
I’ll breach the frailer gateways of her heart,
And sue before the inner courts of love.

I'll move her lips to secrets of the stars,
Then kiss them into central suns of fire.
I'll point her eyes to visions erudite,
Then close them in the dreamy lapse of love.
I'll whet her mind with wordy tournaments,
And every word shall be a sword to pierce
Her heart with mystic wounds, as deep as death,
As sweet as honey-bleeding clover-throats
The bee has lanced.—So shall I strive with her,
My shaft the study of the stars, my shield
The language of the mountain wind and storm
And eloquence of mating nightingale.
But when her eyes have turned from wandering
Among the random stars, and fixed their light
On mine; when song of Talmud and Kaballah
Have melted on her tongue into one word
Of protest so serenely soft and low
I'll take it for submission; when her mind
Has closed the shutters down on truth, and
gropes
And falters through the darkened cells of dreams
And love's hallucinations,—then I'll turn
Back from the delicate brink of my desire,
Bid her a chaste good-night—and let her go!
Into the love-warm goblet of my heart
Let Zachi come, then,—Zachi, full of breast
And red of lip; and let her pour the wine
Of full-blown roses where the bud has formed.
Hence! master-slave, and see thou bringst the
both—
Roxana when the crescent cuts the trees
Of yonder hill, and Zachi when the night
Is luminant with the full, free-risen moon.
And harken! Have a care thou tend them so
That fair Roxana, leaving, have no thought
She goes on Zachi's coming, who, when come,
Shall never know my arms that wait her ache
With the embraces of her sister-bride!

III

ROXANA

Accursed the fickle sweets of night! Accursed
The double faces of the moon! Accursed
This remnant of her glory! With my tears
I dew the dying comet-tail of night,
Receding and down dashing into dawn.
Oh eyes, what floods of tears for my first storm!
What tempests for a maiden-love! What winds,
By tropic summers tempered, sweep me now
Into the lonely winter of my exile!
Lonely!—this night I saw him first; this night
My trembling hand unclasped the virgin veil,
And turned my loveliness to him—my lord!
Silent he sat. No word of flattery
He ventured. Of my golden hair he made
No wonder. Phrases of endearment men
Have bandied down the ages had he lack,
Even to silences unbroken. Love
Was in his face; I blushed to see it there,
Reflecting it, rose-tinted in my own.
But when he spoke, the poets of the past
Sang in his words, till, mounting line by line,
From woodland lyrics unto the ascent
Of clarion battle calls and thunderbursts
Of odes immortal, epics as sublime
As impulse of devotion, love and war,
At last he reached the pinnacle of song—
The sweet, spontaneous poem of his heart!
He bade me sing an ancient versicle,
And when he sang it after me, the strain
With his own feeling throbbed. An open book
He offered me, and when I read for him
The passage purple-scored—the mysteries
Of worlds contracted into diamond points;
Of stars downtrodden into solar fire;
Wee throats of birds uplifted into song;

Glimpse of the morning ; even's fading out ;
Mountain hearts melted into gold ; design
Of daisy ; pattern of the scalloped fern ;
Birth of the blossom from a memory
Of autumn ; art and sculpture of the hills,
Green-veiled and valley-carven ;—when I read
This passage purple-scored unto my lord,
He set his knowledge 'gainst the holy book,
And burying the truth of ages deep
In his romantic superstition, held
That all the planets and revolving spheres
Are skied in heaven's blue, that blooms are set
In fields of grass and bubbles on the river
That love, the only worthy loveliness,
Might have material comparison—
Some splendor wooing words might liken to
Love's fire invisible ; some perfumed dew
Love's lips unto her kisses might compare !
Out-womaned by my lord, at last—at last
I solved his creed : The world and all her sweet
Indulgences to him were but a cloak
About my heart ; the chaos of the stars,
The harvest of forget-me-nots—he set
Them glimmering at my feet to blow and burn
Like candles at the altar of his love !
While yet I held my finger on the page—
The passage purple-scored,—he left his couch,
And like a cloud, above me hovered. Fell
His shadow on my blushes. Sharp and bright
Out of his shadow flashed his royal wit,
Like lightning through the blackness of the
storm ;
And in each fitful flame I seemed to see
The heavens open. Flash on flash did Joy,
The sunny limner, tinge with golden light
The gathering cloudburst of my youth. Then
blew
My master's breath upon me, like a wind

Warming the sand before a hot monsoon.
Then, on my desert lips there fell a rain—
The fragrant tempest of his lips! In vain
The flowering bough-roof of my girlhood
strove

To hide my fire with protests maidenly.
Blind with a new-born intimacy, blind
With love, I saw—'twas passion's second sight—
Or seemed to see the guards of girlhood fade
Far back across the desert; back, on back
And out of calling! Crowned with orange
blooms,

I seemed to walk a rosy way—up—up
Into joy-ridden realms. Birds set the trees
Aquivering with song. A golden gate
Sprang open at my coming. Sentinels
Of Peace and Joy and Beauty and Content
Conducted me into a castle court,
Whence came my bridegroom forth. And when
he smiled,

His radiance was like a rainbow arch
Set over him. "My queen," he said; "my love,
Enter my house, my heart, and rest thee here
Eternally!" "Ah, not a queen," I cried,
"A woman in the household of thy love—
A bride-wife in the bondage of her vows!"
And then—the woman of my lovely dream,
The substance, too, of yearning flesh and blood,
Faint with the first pure vintage of desire,
I cast myself into my master's arms!

* * * * *

And then—Oh, trusting heart of easy wax,
That, warming, took his shape indelibly,—
Now that my lord had wooed me from the height
Of modesty into the lap of love,
He kissed me on the burning lips no more,
But lightly on the forehead and the hair;
And with the grace of power o'er himself,

Resigned me to the eunuch at his door,
And taking Darkness for his sweeter bride,
Slept in her rival arms until the dawn!

IV

ZACHI

Hush! Nightingale—my lord is sleeping now,
Dreaming the weariness of love away—
But jealousy has wormed into mine eyes,
And fixes them in open wakefulness.
Jealousy, aye, the nettlewort of love,
So twined about my heart that every throb
Is vexed and poisoned by the angry stings!
Here, in the stillness of my master's room,—
The midnight audience of the nightingale,—
Before me pass the ghosts of the delights
And disappointments of this bridal tryst!
This night the eunuch said: “Prepare for him!”
Decked by the moon-rise, long I waited—long
Even for me, who weep at dalliance.
The scarlet on my lips was rubbed away
By fret and vexing, and my braided hair,
Sweet with its costly essences, hung loose
For ravings on my couch, whereon, at last,
I threw my burning temples in despair,
To sleep—the mateless bride of solitude!

* * * * *

I dreamed a touch was on me! I awoke!
The eunuch—rigid messenger of the night,—
Stood over me, with words of greatest joy:
“Thy master waits thee—come!” I went to him,
All rosy with the first sweet sleep of night.
Dimly his lamp was burning, as a wick
Grown pauper in a foolish waste of oil.
I slipped into his arms, and wept,—aye, wept

For gladness. Soothing me, he stroked my
hair—

Ah, touch of treason! Hot his hand, as hot
As lover's hand might be, when, in the last
Embraces of a tryst he wrings the pain
Of parting in his touch; and when I wept
The more for knowledge of this thing, he set
His lips upon my tears—whereat the more
I knew from his warm breath and hurried heart
The treason of his love. As well I knew
The golden halo of Roxana's hair
Had mingled with the moonbeams on his breast!
I saw the rugs whereon her feet had danced;
A book upon the shelf, and of its leaves
A page was turned and marked to set her wits
Aright with the authorities of ages;
I saw a lute that she had played upon;
I saw the love-light in my master's eye,
Shining to hold Roxana in his sight,
Though she were gone—and understanding all
With woman's eyes when woman's love is new,
Jealousy slipt into the reign of sleep,
Dethroned her sovereignty and crowned as queen
Her rival—Wakefulness. Ah, what were sleep
To me, who fold my idol to my breast?
To me, possessing him, knowing that when
His ear had tired of music, when his eye
Had wearied of the dancing, when his tongue
Had jaded in the flavors of old wine,
When poetry had lost its subtle art
To please him, when his lips were very near
The kiss he would not rob from girlish bloom,
His arms about the prize he would not claim
From youth—then, then, and only then he
thought
Of me, the full of breast and red of lip—
The star of golden languor, and the heart
Of warm, wild wine; because he had drained dry

The current of all little joys that lead,
Delicate step by step, to ecstasy:
Because,—Oh, bitter lack!—I could not bring
Him any gift of music, song or wealth
Of grace upon the rugs, my only gift
The fickle oriflamme of woman's love!

SIPSU

The wolf-winds lift their voices to the night,
And shake the snow-flakes from the shaggy
manes
Of shivering birchen-bough and stunted pine.
Like some bed-fellow, followed to his sleep
By whirl-winds of the northland night, the hides
That cover me impart a frosty chill
To arm and ankle. Howls of boreal pain
Break from the suffering river's choking throat,
The white, volcanic ridges of her breast.
A beard of frost encrusts with a rigid sneer
The whittled faces on my totem-pole.
Save for the man-babe folded to my breast,
Alone I cry defiance to the winds;
My place is vacant in my father's tent;
Not even mine the shadow of his tent-flap,
Nor mine to mingle in the council-ring
Of Shaman and of Factor, great of speech,
Nor maidens of the dance and walrus drum.
Sipsu, a Chieftain's daughter, nursed and weaned
Upon the breast of Kilisnoo, a maid
And Princess of the Kiukuk, is clad
In parka coarser than the thrice-sold klooch
Of any half-breed! Mine the scorn of maid,
The grin of buck, the grunt ironical
Of tottering squaws and children at their heels.
The very huskies, wont to lick my hand,
And gnaw each other for the favoring touch,
Slink from the trail I break, as if my scent

Were poison scattered windward of their bellies!
Sipsu is fair to look upon, and fair
And full of faith her word; and she is strong
To break the trail, and bend a paddle, too;
And she can turn a cake of flour to brown,
And brew the white-man's tea and coffee bean.
Then why is Sipsu hungry and alone?—
Because she will not give her taken hand
To Nokiyomo, straightest of the Siwash.
For this the scanty trimmings of the hides
Are given me for parka; and for food
The scrapings of the pelts; and for my fire
The watery drift of river-bog and marsh-land;—
And yet, as long as Sipsu's heart is warm,
Though arm and ankle shiver, though her kin
And wooing lovers call her, nevermore
Will Sipsu sit among her people, jest
Among the bucks and dogs, nor come again
To smell the potted meat of Nokiyomo!—
For Sipsu is a fungus on her tribe,
Fastened upon the Past, and into it
Eating, as wolves into the spongy caves
Of starven huskies, dead along the trail!
Her heart is warm as any wee papoose
Asleep before the fire in coils of fur;
Her heart is happy with its Past—and why?
Harken! I tell the story to the winds—
As one who is not Sipsu do I tell it:

One day the warm aurora of the sun
Kindled her golden fire upon the hills;
The frost had risen, as a spirit white,
Up from the ground, and quit the land of Si-
wash;
The polished river ran, a walrus tusk
Of ivory, curving upward from the sea,
Goring the valley with a fragrant wound
That healed with banks of flowers and ivy green.

All men pushed back the nose-traps from their faces,

And maidens slipped the parkas from their throats.

Then Sipsu paddled down the river. Soft Her hair, and full and warm her breast; as bright

As flowers along the shore her gladdening eyes. She would have sung, so light her maiden heart,—

But, Chieftain's daughter born of Kilisnoo,— She trapped her lips and held the dignity Of silence, singing in her heart for joy, Or listening to the birds that sang for her. It chanced that in the bending of the river The trail had slipped, and path and water strove For place upon the shore. As Sipsu neared The gap she saw a horse and rider plunge Into the stream! She drove her swift canoe Close to the struggling twain. The man was caught

Fast in the trappings, and his floundering beast Was drowning him and self. The maiden flashed Her hunting knife, and would have slipped the load

Loose from the sinking horse; but with his mouth Half silenced in the water, spake the man In Siwash tongue: "Nay, maiden, let me drown, Or save with me the gold that threatens me!"

Sipsu is strong—and when he gained the trail, And stood beside his panting brute, she saw— His clothes were water-clung—she saw his limbs Were lean and strong; his face was white, but lit

With blood, as roses stain the arctic snows; His hair was golden, and so long unshorn It fell upon his brow in dripping curls;

Not piercing black his eyes, but soft and blue,
Like the blue distance down the gulch, which
 holds

In dim outlines the fringes of the pines,
With hints of mosses at their roots, and clumps
Of blooms and peppery ferns. He bade her
 reach

Into his saddle-bags, and choose her pay
For his deliverance, but Sipsu said:
“Sweeter the little pan of golden grains
Trapped in the running water than the store
Of hundred-weights in common barter made—”
And, speaking so, she dried his golden hair;
Whereat, he caught her up, and lifted her
Upon his horse, and rode her into camp.
Setting her on the grass before her tent,
He whistled out her father, gave him stock
Of smoking weed, and gave her mother sweets—
For Sipsu had outfrowned his every gift,
Except his gentle word. And when he passed
Into the purple distance of the valley,
The mist was in her eyes, and at her throat
It seemed a dog had leaped and fixed his fangs!

Then Sipsu sat among the birds of spring,
Her song the silence, grief her sullen brood;
The cries of children hurt her breast; the face
Of Nokiyomo seemed a grinning ghost;
The grasses green a shroud upon the ground;
The lily-horn a cup of woe; the river
A veil of mourning fallen from the hills!
One day the veil was lifted! He returned—
The careless stranger! Fast and straight he
 came,
As one who runs before his wish of heart.
His curls were dry, and dancing with the lope
And gallop of his pony. Straight he came
Unto the tent of Sipsu.—By the night

Her father puffed a thicker cloud of smoke,
Her mother smacked her lips on sugary drops;
And Sipsu's hand, desired of Nokiyomo,
Was slipped into the stranger's hand. She bore
The troth in silence, as a maiden should—
But all her strength was in her lips, to stay
The cries of joy that bubbled to her mouth!
So Sipsu went, his wife, adoring him,
Into his cabin, fresh and new. The smell
Of pine-knots oozed from rib to rafter. Pans
And kettles, curious to Sipsu's eyes,
Squatted around the stove, all ready set
And kindled for the cooking of his meat,
The brewing of his tea and coffee-bean.
In one dim corner was a hump of furs,
And woolen blankets, gray and doubled down,—
Whereat beholding, Sipsu felt again
The wolf-dog at her throat—but now the touch
Was not of fangs, but of a soothing tongue!
And when she turned to brown his cakes of flour
And would have stood behind to serve, he bade
Her sit beside, and eat from his own dish.
He treasured for her tongue the tenderest bits
Of moose and deer-meat, shredded fine for her,
Or, laughing, fed her with his finger-tips.
And Sipsu's hair grew glossy 'neath his touch;
Bright were her eyes for looking into his;
The love-sunned snow-drifts of her spring-time
breast
Melted to nourishment for his first-born;
Her lips became a rose, as if his kisses
That fell upon them were the paint of war;
And yet, his chimney was a pipe of peace,
Sweet with the smoke of meat, and breath of
pine-boughs—
So Sipsu and her love beside the fire
Sat in a sunny council—man and maid!

Then dropped the word of Eldorado! Ice
Gorged in the river, neither still nor free,
A lure but not a help. The forking trail
Was swept into a blinding patch of snow,
Nor man nor huskie knew the turnings of it;
But men, their hearts aflame with the yellow-
fire,
Broke from the shelter of their cabin doors,
With shout and crack of lash, and bantering
word,
Into the teeth of winter gleefully
Onrushing—and to self-dug graves of gold!
And first of all the foolish—Sipsu's man—
The stout, undaunted breaker of the trail!

Women of Kiukuk and Siwash maids
Crept back into the moose-hides in their tents,
And nursed their grief, or croned above the sleep
Of little quarter-breeds. And they that went,
Some of them perished, and their brothers heard
Their freezing groans along the gleaming way;
Others returned, but left their hands and feet
To chart the lodes among the grinding ice;
Still others, weaned of wisdom by the doom
Of loneliness and winter-bitten hope,
Unpacked the frozen fancies of their heads—
The prattle of yellow gold-drifts up the creeks,
Dust of it blown into their eyes and mouth
And hair by every wind-gust of the valley,
Pans of it filtered from the sluice of dreams!
A few, the strongest of the strong, returned
With gold; and every man that straggled in
Sipsu, the maiden, waited for—in vain!

They tell her tales of how the blinding night
Carried him down the vale, a darkening storm
Hiding him from her cabin-door, his trail
A wag of tongues behind him, and his gold—

Gold that he pinched from cold and hunger, gold
The undivided dower of the dead!
They say he bought the swiftest huskies, leashed
These to his sledge, and, lest his Sipsu follow
His dash to Dawson, other village dogs
He also bought—and slaughtered in the snow!
And Sipsu hears the echoes of strange tales
Of how he rules and riots now, the chief
Of Grecian dancers, painted cards and dice!

But I am Sipsu—and I know his heart.
The flowers are not truer to their breed,
Purple to kindred purple, gold to gold,
Pink to the sister blush, and white to white,
Than his heart was to mine. The flowers fail
In winter, as he failed; but as the spring
Returns the famished children of the rose,
So shall he come again—and Sipsu hopes.
I know his eyes—they were as blue with faith
As any violet; how could he cast
Love's bright aurora on another, while
I wait and nurse his first-born at my breast?
I know his word—he never said: "I go
To fetch the sweetest flavors of the wood."
But what the noblest moose of all the pines,
Tracked to a stand-still, tumbled to his aim!
I know the touch of his strong hand—the hand
That bound me close so many, many times
With trembling touch; is that the hand to lead
Into his cabin other loves than mine?
Nay; Chief and Shaman lie!—I'll keep the logs
Still burning at his camp-fire, while I search
The black-cheeked faces stumbling down the
hills—
Down from the frozen everglades of snow.
I'll bullet-split the sapling day by day,
Training my hand and eye the faithful slave
To serve his hungry mouth, and keep the meat
Abundant in his cabin of the pines!

So Sipsu lives, the fungus of her tribe,
Clinging unto the Past, as lichens cling
Unto the fallen birches—till he comes
Happy to hold her word, her hand, her heart
Out of the councils of her kin, the tent
And hide-bed of the wooing Nokiyomo;
And if he come not, Sipsu shall depart
Into the deathly distance, seeking him;
When she has found his bones along the trail,
In melting spring, she'll lay her warm young
throat
Upon the wondering grass beside him there,
Slip from his arms the saddle-bags of gold,
And, winding them about her bosom, melt
Into his ashes, and the woodland flowers!

THE SLUGGARD.

He laughs at quick almighty moments,—he
The father fungus of the wheeling world.
Locked in the arms of Fortune and of Chance,
He weights the imperial ground with heavy feet,
Which backward drag against the grist of Time.
What secret does he dig from gulch or glen?
What finger has he stiffened to upraise
The imploring hand of poverty and woe?
Does he awake to orphan cries at night,
When winter sinks her teeth into the home
Of fatherless and motherless? The sick,
Do they arise to thank him for a word
Of comfort? Have the blinded felt his touch
Leading them through the dark of broken eyes,
Beyond the pitfall and the rutted road?

Uncaught in Care's thrice-guarded prison
hold,
To him what are the chains of love and woe?
What is war's cry for valor in the trench,

While sorrow weeps each glory into dust?
Or what the failing city-cry for bread,
While each returning harvest moon is sure
To give its rest, its manna and its wine?
Drone of the human hive, he crowds the hearth
And home. He drives a sprag into the wheels
Of industry, that buzz his sloth to scorn.
He digs a pitfall underneath the gaze
Of searching eyes, uplifted to the stars.
He blocks the passage up the slope of song,
He dulls the edge of chivalry. He rusts
The hinges on the doorway of the Past.
He is a parasite upon the oak
Of sturdy manhood, and a festering mote,
Which, grafted from the chosen fate of fools,
Would dim the keen-eyed ministry of man.

What is this thing—this breathing death—
this cry

Of protest rising out of idle lungs—
This chaos in the echo-voice of Time—
This pedal on the music of the world?
What glimpses of the hunted truth are lost
In this deep drain of selfish tears! What light
Fails in the smothering shadow of his soul!
What might is mangled for the bone, the blood
And muscle of his dreams! What fellowship
He buries in the warmth of folded hands!
What love might yet refresh his withered heart,
Had he but calmed the tempest of his pride,
And fired his nobler pulses with the joy
Of home, and happy children at his knee!—
Had he a castle stronger than the shell
Of his own dark existence, and the blind,
Which, closing in the infamy of ease,
Shuts out the sunny providence of God,
Who sets his rainbow in the dew of toil—
A sovereign promise for the bended brow.

How shall the sluggard look upon that sign,
When prophecy and promise are approved
By bright-eyed Justice in the Courts of Age?
What place shall be his pillow 'neath the crown
When Labor heeds the warning of her dream,
And gains, with easy step, her stately throne?
How shall he hide the whiteness of his palm,
When, sceptreless and naked at her side,
Her hurricanes of Truth assault the world?

O brawn of busy hands! if thou shalt sag
A little in the battle-work of life,
What arm shall arch the toilsome paths of Peace?
What hand shall give its sinews to support
The balance of the Scarlet Judge of War?
What voice shall lift its volume to the Truth,
And call the Nations to her holy height?
Not in the pride of idleness is hope;
Not in the wide rebellion of the vain;
Down the gray avenues of Egypt's pride,
Forever kept in skeletons of stone,
There is no heart so dry, no tongue so mute
As these in bondage to their nothingness.
Kingdoms shall perish ere their blood is moved,
And planets wither, waiting for their word—
Labor is life, and in her life shall hope
The unwinding years uncover at their core;—
Labor that walks her tread-mill, master free,
And watching sunward, leaps her gulfs to God,
To challenge the distinction of Mankind,
And people plains of Glory and Renown.

THE BURIAL OF ORANGE TSU

Quiet and quaint she lies, supreme in death,
Forsaken now by kindred, lover, friend,
Sweeter than jasmine in her last long breath,
And blithe in sin and folly to the end!

For in the Yoshiwara, where the ground
Blossoms with beauty doomed to withering,
A flowering fan and Orange Tsu were found—
Just as a cuckoo cleared his throat to sing !

A carven frame of teak-wood for a bier,
A perfumed fan beside her for a friend,
They bore the blighted little blossom here,
Smiling upon her cushions to the end.

Silent she lies, a rival in her smile
To solemn mysteries of the storied dead ;
Outliving death with gaiety of guile,
And all the shadowy sins of heart and head.

Where are the kin, who grieved to see her whole
Heart drained to dew the Yoshiwara bow-
ers ?—

All, all resign her long forgotten soul
Unto the calm indulgence of the flowers.

But round her kneel, as courtiers to their queen,
The pale and tragic spirits of her years—
Not very many, only seventeen—
Few, few to know so many smiles and tears !

One, weeping, stains the oval cheeks that tell
Of make and mold above the lowly caste,
And smites his breast to hear the passing-bell
Revive the enchanting music of her past.

One lifts the virgin rose of spotless white
Free from the glossy tresses of her head,
And in that jet of shadow and the night
He twines the yearning, guilty rose of red.

Still others stoop to move the marble mouth
With faint delusions of some early wile

That stirred her blood-warm girlhood, when the
south
Came to her on the passport of a smile.

Could Asoyama's breast of ash renew
The fire of Shinto in her wandering soul,
I doubt the light could pilot Orange Tsu—
So wide the circling dark about her goal!

So long she trusted to the love caress,
The boon of folly and the dreams of life,
'Tis hers to weep for childish helplessness—
Now that stern Death has taken her to wife!

THE MAID OF SPARTA

Oh, come to me when the Persian blood
Is red on thy father's sword —
And if thy scars be upon thy breast,
I will give thee my wedding word.

Oh, come to me when the battle shout
Has anointed the lips of thy vow—
And I will bind thy wounds with oil—
And bathe thy matted brow.

Oh, come to me when the heart of the foe
Has dulled the barb of thy spear—
And if thy shield be upon thy arm,
I will hear thee—I will hear.

Come when thy bone and sinew ache
From the marches many and long—
And I will rest thee in my arms,
With a love both true and strong.

Come to me when thine eyes are dim
With the brine of the galley fight—
And I will unbind my silken hair,
And wash them clear and bright.

Or come to me, undaunted, dead,
Borne back from the front of the field—
And I will pledge eternal love
With the garlands on thy shield !

GOOD NIGHT

Good night! I sing no parting song—Good night!

Beside me are the warm young hands, as white
And sensitive as when, awake at dawn,
I saw them gleaming in the morning light.

Reverently I kissed your finger tips,
Lest, if I press my kiss upon your lips,
The timid dream take flight;—and I have
learned
Out of your sleep your finest fancy slips.

One night the glory of the moon did break
Over you, sleeping, and I heard you make
Your sweetest love's confession unto me—
Ah! happy hour, that I did lie awake.

You dreamed that it was night (your broken
word
I so interpreted), and that you heard
The thrush of adoration in me sing
To you, as I do now—your heart was stirred.

And in your dream you pressed your lily arm
Across my breast; till, wild with this sweet
charm—
This dream-surrender of your shyer self,—
I kissed your eyes. They opened in alarm!

Then, sweeter than the sweetest thoughts you
keep
For dream-communion, fell the wonder deep:—
My arms about your heart, your hand on mine,
You closed your eyes again and fell asleep!

Good-night! I keep your whisper for my dream,
It is my song of slumber till the gleam
 Of rosy dawn shall call us, and the sun
Shall bind our days together with a beam;

Together have we spent our little might
To bless the day that dies; a single light
 Is leading us across the trail of dreams—
Good-night! Companion, lover, queen,—Good-
 night!

THE BURIAL OF A JAPANESE SOLDIER

Gather, ye priests in the raiment of Buddha!
 Haste with your garlands of cherry in bloom!
Comes here a soldier returned from the battle,
 Crimson with glory, and pallid with doom!

Sound him the rallying-cry and the drum-beat;
 Signal your sorrow from temples and towers;
Scatter the fire of your altars upon him;
 Cover him deep with the petals of flowers!

Tenderly bear him, as servants of glory—
 Ye that are high at the altars of god;
Carry him hither, with smouldering censers
 Smoking his path to the peace of the clod.

Lay him to rest where the rose and the orange
 Sweeten the shadows that mourn for the slain;
Where the wistarias lavish their purple
 Tear-drops upon him like opals of rain.

Make ye a choice of your loveliest virgin;
 Let her come down from her house, like a star
Bidden from heaven, and tend him through vigils
 Long as the withering season of war.

Censers of myrrh and the fire of your altars
Give her to burn on the breast of the brave—
Then shall the seed of his death, and his glory
 Burgeon and bloom in the grass of his grave.

Hither, ye priests in the raiment of Buddha !
 Back to your stalls in the temples and towers !—
Leave him alone to the worship of woman,
 Glory of death, and reward of the flowers !

THE MAGIC OF A MANSION

Midway between the gates of Birth and Death,
 Half-shadowed by Oblivion's border-wood,
Along a highway, hard with pilgrim feet,
 A house, untenanted and empty, stood.

Wealth, gilded, came, with serf and prancing
 steed,
 To dwell therein ; and gold and precious stone
Glittered from rafter unto architrave—
 But Wealth was cold, and lived her days alone.

Then Beauty knocked, and, entering with a smile,
 Was given welcome and a stately room—
But never sister called on Beauty there,
 And all her radiance faded in the gloom.

Power breached a wall, and locked himself be-
 hind
 His sleepless guards and bars of tested steel ;
Beyond the help of friend, the wrath of foe,
 He perished in his caution and his zeal.

The house grew old. Fame climbed an ivied
 wall,
 And burned his deeds above the creaky door ;
But all men read the words of cold neglect,
 And sought for Fame in that house nevermore.

Then Love, pursued by her own fear, one night
Took refuge in the mansion lone and drear.
A fire she kindled on the hearth—Behold!
A group of fellow-fugitives drew near!

They warmed themselves before the blazing fire;
They sipped the wine for years in dungeon hid;
They found the bones of Wealth and Power and
Pride,
And smiled about the foolish deeds they did.

Glad voices rang in many a startled room
Where silence dreamed her dusty dreams for
years,
And laughter rattled many a shaky pane
Time's housekeeper had washed with misty
tears.

And nevermore men pass that cheery house—
The young that ramble and the old that tire—
Without a cup of comfort in its shade,
A moment's chat and rest before the fire!

THE DUEL

Deep in the silent forest,
We met, my foe and I;
No seconds to attend us,
Leaf-hid from every eye.

“Harken!” he said, my rival;
“He whom the fates doth save
Shall bury victory's secret
In the defeated's grave!”

I nodded, pale and sullen—
Our swords inflamed the air;
I parried for his bosom—
A rose was burning there!

I coaxed a fatal open;
With desperate chance of art
My blade transfix'd the flower
And drank his hated heart.

Sunken upon the mosses,
He murmured, as he died:
"Thanks, gentle foe—I triumph,
And death is dignified!"

"The heart thou aimed to perish
In her heart lies at rest;
The rose thou pierced was *her* heart—
She placed it in my breast!"

THE PURPLE VOICES

We met in a shadowy forest,
Beside a limpid lake;
Our hearts were bitter rivals,
And one must bleed and break!

We parried in the gloaming,
We crushed the tender grass,
We matched our strength and cunning—
All for a little lass!

He slipped—oh fatal instant!
I ran him through and through;
He kissed the lowly mosses
With lips of purple dew!

I flung his loveless body
Into the silent lake;
Our hearts were bitter rivals,
And one was doomed to break?

Down! down! I thought to bury
The purple of the past
In every closing ripple
I counted for the last.

But through and through the flowers,
And through and through the wood,
I heard the purple voices
Staining the solitude.

The birches, pale, reproachful,
Were tremulously still,
As souls aghast at murder
Who quake against their will.

The sorrowing moss uplifted
Its chalice from the wood,
As children of a martyr
Begging his sacred blood.

Adown the flowery hedges,
And through and through the wood,
I heard the purple voices
Staining the solitude.

A WOODLAND AWAKENING

A whisper trembles down the valley,
A stir awakes the drowsy glen
To council chat and mating rally
Of bobolink and thrush and wren.

The yellow-hammer raps his gavel
Upon the hollow rampick wood,
And sessions of the birds unravel
The silences of solitude.

The flute of lark and wild canary,
The eloquence of pattering rain,—
Evangelists of bud and berry,—
Recall the world to joy again.

By miracle of sun and shower,
By exorcism of the dew,
Unfold the dimples of the flowers
From glance of gold and blush of blue.

The buttercup, a child of laughter,
The treasurer of wind and wold,
Follows the breeze, and scatters after
Her dividends of fragrant gold.

Patches of crowding bluets tremble
Upon the breast of the ravine,
Pleiads of turquoise that assemble
And glimmer on a sky of green.

The wild wistaria and bramble
To ledge of flint and moss aspire,
And from the summit of their ramble
Send back their messages of fire;—

The rockets of their falling flowers,
Signals of white and purple flame,
To light the triumph of the showers,
And give the summer sun his fame.

A word is spreading, mad and merry;
A whisper deepens down the glen—
Evangelists of bud and berry
Recall the world to joy again!

SONG OF THE MIDDY'S MOTHER.

He is off!—my boy—to the sounding seas,
Where the gale and the plunging ships
Shall toss the salt of the stinging foam
On his brow, and eyes, and lips—
Where my blessings rest, and my kisses, too,
With the silent tears that fell
From a love as deep as the sounding sea,
In a mother's last farewell!

For this did I fold him to my breast
When he was a little child—
The billow and cloud and driving rain
And the tempest black and wild?
For this did I build him bright and strong
And nourish him brave and true?—
Ah, yes, and I add a blessing now
In the grief of the parting, too.

Far out—in a mother's second-sight,
That is part of a mother's love—
I can see my boy on the raging sea
When the storm is thick above;
And off in the mist the battle-hulks
Of the foemen's shattered line—

And oh, the pride of his mother then,
If his heart be as stout as mine!

And I but pray that as I have given
My boy to his country's flag,
He give himself when the shot and shell
Have made it a battle-rag;
For a mother's joy is a mother's pride,
As a mother's pang may be,
When she risks her blood with her darling's
blood
For the honor of the sea.

But another prayer is in my heart,
And its fervour grows and grows,
The longer he mans the battle-mast,
And drills at the battle-bows—
That the peace of God and peace of men
And peace of the sounding sea
May keep the honor of my boy
And return him safe to me.

THE SHIPS OF CHANCE

Far out they sail from harbor bar and bay—
The newly trimmed and gallant ships of
chance,
The flying squadron of my outward hopes—
Across the ebb and swell of circumstance.

O hopes outbound from inland dream to bay—
Aboard the squadron then—and then to sea—
What little time to loiter on the sand,
And ponder on the cruise that is to be!

What hurried hours to study the great chart—
Current and shoal from port to port to be—
Ere, every canvas bellied in the wind,
The flying squadron plunges out to sea!

What if they wait the driving gale of luck?
What if they sit, becalmed of sail and hull?—
Nor wind nor wave can lose them from their
course
Nor change their destiny by storm or lull.

O it may be that, plunging out to sea,
The fragile ships escape the foam-white rocks;
O it may be that in the cruise of chance
They miss destruction, loitering in the docks!

THE SKEPTIC

Wondering I stood beside a bough of bloom
Which bent its hallowed head above a stream,
And, like a monk who prays against the doom
Of death, it counted off its summer dream
In one long rosary of fragrance, till
The last breath melted on the silver rill;
And cold with disbelief, I faltered there,
For I could read no answer to my prayer.

But now, in glad October's spreading blush,
I pause again along the orchard-place—
Lo, brighter than the brown blur of the thrush
And all his flutter in the ivy-lace,
The great red pippins, born of summer's dream,
Drop purple shadow-beads into the stream—
God's answer to the blossom-prayer—and now
I do believe, nor ask the why or how!

THE MAN OF THE HOUR

A magic lamp, unlovely for the lack
Of legendry in gem and carven scroll,
Burned in a dusky chamber of the world,
With untrimmed wick asmolder in the bowl.

Then timid Chance—the Chamberlain of God,—
Astumble in the dark, with groping hand
Scattered the crust of ashes from the wick—
And lighted every corner of the land!

CIRCUMSTANCE

I set a snare for woman's fickle love,
And baited it with hope and cunning art—
Alas! a sin was tangled in my soul,
And Tragedy was lured into my heart!

WHEN THE DANCE IS DONE

Now the flush autumn, homing from the dance
Of summer sunbeams, dreaming o'er the words
Of suing winds, and humming still the last
Mazurka of the orchestra of birds,

A moment pauses by the river's glass,
To scan the signs of weariness that show;
Then lays aside her purple and her gold,
And slips beneath her coverlets of snow!

LEARNIN' T' PLAY

I never see some feller take his fiddle from the peg,
An' rub his chunk of rosin on the bow, an' cross his leg,
But what I want ter cross *my* legs an' rub my bow that way,
An' own a fiddle on a peg, an' take it down an' play.
But onst I saved my pennies up, a'most a year or so,
An' went an' bought a fiddle an' some rosin an' a bow.
The feller that I bought it from could play—I never heard
Sech music—"Annie Laurie," "Home, Sweet Home," an' "Mockin' Bird;"
But when I got that fiddle I sot beside the door,
An' sawed at "Annie Laurie" till my arms and legs was sore—
You wouldn't know'd 'twere "Annie,"—but fer weeks an' months, I 'low,
I tried ter play the fiddle—but I never l'arned how!

Some feller sneaked around the house one bud-din' morn in May,
An' swore he had an instrument that any *child* could play—
A little harp he said the Jews'd stick between their lips,
An' make it play a tune with nothin' but their finger-tips;
He did it too—right there and then—that very hour an' day—

But soon as he had sold *me* one he sort o' slipped
away ;
An' there I sat upon the porch, a-bitin' at the
thing,
A-tryin' hard ter make it play, or holler out, or
sing—
Now, I could *feel* the twangin' tune a-ticklin' my
lips,
But couldn't help a-spoilin' 't with my awkward
finger-tips,
An' when my neighbors ask me 'bout my Jewish
harp, I say :
"Kerrect!—I guess I—bought—one—but I never
l'arned ter play!"

It warn't long afore a feller, polished as yer
please,
Had showed me somethin' *easy*, I could play
upon my knees ;
He called it an accordeon ; he pulled it in an' out,
An' fairly made it sing an' sigh, an' whistle, play,
an' shout ;
He fingered it, an' petted it, an' looked the other
way,
An' all the time the music kept a-comin' grand
an' gay ;
But when I tuk that awkward thing an' tucked
it 'tween my knees,
I couldn't keep the wind a-goin' while I worked
the keys ;
I pulled until that bellows wore ter rags an'
shreds of yarn,
I drove the neighbors crazy, an' the kittens ter
the barn ;
An' if yer want ter see that old accordion ter-
day,

Yer'll find it in the pasture—where I threw the
thing away!

An' still the music in me wouldn't let my spirit
rest—

I thought I'd buy a horn and try ter do my level
best!

The feller that I bought it from, he put it ter his
lips,

And touched the little stoppers with his skinny
finger-tips;

I wish you'd heard him trillin' out "The Sugar
in the Gourd"—

No wonder that I bought the horn an' tuk him
at his word!

But now I've been a-tootin' till I'm purple in the
face,

I've driven all the chickens an' the turkeys from
the place;

My chest is swellin' bigger, an' my wind is pow-
erful good—

But I'm not so pert at tootin' as I am at choppin'
wood;

An' purty soon I calkerlate ter set that horn
away

An' go ter splittin' shingles—fer I'll never l'arn
ter play!

THE ECHO

A thundering tone, hard driven down a glen,
Broke on the granite at a mountain's feet,
And tremulous, and soft and lowly, then
Returned, a finished echo, pure and sweet.

In ancient days a voice of mighty power
Sang out the glory of our land to be;—
Back from the walls of circumstance, this hour
That word returns,—a rounded prophecy!

TO A DYING BEE

We are twin-spirits, fit to understand
Each other's sorrow—you a dying bee,
Drowsy and numb upon the grass, and I
The ashes of a dream that burned in me.

When summer sent you booming down the dune,
Thirsting you came unto a flower new
And seeming sweet. You sipped your heart's
desire—
And lo, the nectar was a poison-dew!

When summer sent me singing down the moor,
I found a wilding lily, and her breath
Was woman's witchery. I thought it sweet—
Aye, sweetened wormwood, and the dregs
were death.

We are twin-spirits, cheated by a sign
Of venom gilded with a shallow gleam,—
You drowsy from the poisoned honey, I
Awake to the deception of a dream.

DREAM OF THE DANCING BEAR

“Dol, dol, e dol, dol,
Dol e dol de dum——”
That is the silly song
The bear men hum;
And the funny old bear,
Like a ball unwound,
Lifts up his snout,
And dances around.

“Dol, dol, e dol, dol,
Dol e dol de dum——”
That seems a silly song
To boys that come;
But the funny old bear
He has learned the sound,
And he lifts up his snout,
And dances around.

“Dol, dol, e dol, dol,
Dol e dol de dum——”
That’s how an arctic dream
To him has come;
And the funny new trick,
And strange new tone
Are things that he learned
In a far off zone.

“Dol, dol, e dol, dol,
Dol e dol de dum——”
Scarcely he heeds the song
The bear men hum;
But he grunts “Good day!”
And rolls on the ground,
And wrestles an hour
And dances around.

“Dol, dol, e dol, dol,
Dol e dol de dum——”
The Northwind is saying when
The bear men hum;
And the funny old bear
To that “dol, dol” theme,
Is dancing around
In a sad old dream!

AN OCTOBER PARADOX

All summer long the zephyr wooed the leaf
In vain with pleasing suns and driving storms;
Then sullen came and went, his ardor lost,
His greeting curt, his word a breath of frost—
Red blushed the leaf, and swooned into his
arms.

Long summer days I wooed my love in vain,
Flouted to scorn by lake and changing sea;
I met her, brown October in my mood,
Frost in my heart and autumn in my blood—
Straightway she smiled, and gave herself to
me.

LIFE'S GIFTS

What bring you, love, to my lonely heart
In the mating days of spring?
A lover true and a little part
Of the joy in everything;
The budding grace of an early May,
The thought of bees on a flowery way,
Whose honeyed moments to you I bring,
And offer them at your feet to-day—
And with the honey, the sting.

What bring you, love, to my weary sight
In the mellow month of June?
An eye to look from the sombre night
Back to the glory of noon;
A vision of suns that never set
On roses June shall never forget.
Roses I bring; and withered and torn
In winter winds, you shall know them yet—
For with them I leave the thorn.

What bring you, love, to my listening ear
When the autumn birds are gone?
A beloved footstep coming near,
And songs of the harvest done;
The songs of a love as ripe and true
As pippins red in the autumn dew;
Songs of a reaper who worked alone
That he might bring a harvest to you—
And with it the brambles sown.

What bring you, love, to my lonely life
When the autumn zones are crossed
A sunny hearth and a cheerful wife.
And what if the world is lost
In a sea of whiteness overspread?

And what if the autumn grass is dead?
I bring the summer you treasure most:
The love of June when June has fled—
And with it I bring the frost.

THE NEW BABY

"I chose a good mother."—Panama's first word, in a press cartoon.

I chose a good mother in Uncle Sam;
Though little and young I be,
The chipperest child he owns I am,
When I rock on his skinny knee.
The last of the Southern sisterhood,
I take up the bottle and gum,
And hoist my flag with a lusty yell,
And beat on my little drum!

I chose a good mother in Uncle Sam;
His knees are as sharp as rails—
But his syrup soothes me like a clam,
And his diet never fails;
And while he is busy cutting his ditch
From sea to the western sea,
I sit in his lap, and cut my teeth
On the bone he gives to me.

I chose a good mother in Uncle Sam;
If I wake with a cry at night,
When the southern thunder breaks the calm,
He will rise and strike a light—
And woe to the goblin or the ghost
Or the giant or jealous sib
That comes to devour or frighten me
In my guarded slumber-crib!

I chose a good mother in Uncle Sam;
He has played the mother and nurse

To a dozen orphans, of which I am
 The last—I might do worse!
Liberia, Guam, and Cuba's isle,
 The Philippines and me—
He has nursed us all in the lap of peace
 With the milk of liberty!

I chose a good mother in Uncle Sam;
 I sit on his skinny knee
And coo and crow, and cry for jam—
 The pet of the family;
But behind the cradle and book of songs,
 And the "Hints to Motherhood,"
I spy the limber birchen-switch—
 So I mean to be very good!

THE TRYST

When the first watches of the night are set,
 And flares the plaited armor of the pine,
My feet upon the flowers, I forget
 The soldier guards of slumber. Through the
 line
Of picket poppies and the tented dew,
On June air, sweet with sleep, I come to you.
Then—then the fire of fragrance in your breath;
 The master touch of gleaming finger-tips;
The sinking protest, fainted to its death;
 And then—the human heaven of your lips!
With all the joy of things that are, and seem,
 Vibrant as bells that touch, and, trembling,
 part,
The last low' whisper sounding in my dream,
 And the wild sweetness ringing in my heart.

INSPIRATION

Why do I struggle up the rocky hill,
Without a murmur, to the summit snow?
Because you, singing, journey with me still,
And cheer me as I go.

Why do I tread the thorn and stubble field
Without one look of hidden pain that shows?
Because among the thorns you have concealed
The sweet, consoling rose.

Why do I fail, look up again, and try
Like one who wears a laurel, freshly set?
Because your patience is as slow to die
As Failure to forget.

THE OPULENCE OF CONTENT

I am not rich in heaps of yellow gold;
But, when the bubbling bobolink has told
His dreaming of the twilight in the morn,
My heart o'erflows, so much of joy I hold.

I am not clothed in scarlet robes of kings;
But, when the crimson cardinal so sings,
That song and raiment flash at once on me,--
I have the ermine sweet, without the stings.

Not mine the learning of some men that are;
But, when I hear a lambkin, from afar,
Bleating, and save it from the pit, my joy
Is great as had I found an unknown star.

I have not castles, lands, or gems of art;
But not for these would I my treasures part,—
Content enough to fill my soul with peace,
An overflow of gladness for my heart.

THE ALCHEMIST

Let me but set the golden andirons
Of Health and Love at every circled hearth—
And I'll dissolve the sorrows of the world,
And dry the tears of every woe on earth!

THE SONG OF THE UNDER-WORLD

Nerved to the threats of angry bass
With danger in every word,
The miner pecks at the arching black—
A terrible, steel-beaked bird.
His lamp, befluttered with awful sound,
Is freed of an oily spark,
And a dusty comet cuts the gloom—
A star of the under-dark.

And it's dig, dig, dig,
In days of the double dark,
Till the danger spot
Of a powder shot
Has spitted its warning spark.
And it's dig, dig, dig,
Till sickness begins to tell
That the work within
Is a human sin
And suffers a human hell.

Bent to the curves of driven blows,
Or straight in the after-strain,
He rubs at the face of ages, bound
In the ribs of ages slain;
He draws the teeth of the world, that munch
The forests of melted trees,
And laboring, moistens with his sweat
The dust of the centuries.

And it's dig, dig, dig,
Where the double echoes dwell,
Till the sputtering oil
And the wasting toil
Are weak in the sounding cell.

And it's dig, dig, dig,
Till the finger fall of Fate
Throws up her play
To the careless way
And the quicker fall of slate.

Chased by the ghosts of settling airs,
He knocks at the stygian door;
He chisels the ebon ribs of earth,
And drives at the slated core;
He plucks at the frozen ferns of stone;
He chops at the melted trees,
And over the black of fallen forms
Are the ghosts of things he sees.

And it's dig, dig, dig,
With a tempered grip of steel,
Till the veins of red
Are as black and dead
As night in its stubborn zeal.
And it's dig, dig, dig,
Till the tunnel's shape is run,—
Till the hollow worm
Of the pit, asquirm,
And the worm of work are done.

THE RELIGION OF THE WOOD

Under the great cathedral of the sky,
Far down the pillared aisles of ash and pine,
I join the prayer of poppies bended low,
And count the beaded rosary of the vine.

A transept of blue heaven overhead,
A choir of birds half hid in copse and scar,
My worship is the pleading of the pine,
The burning adoration of a star.

The pleading of the pine that reaches up
With outstretched arms, confiding as a child—
The trees, are they not born into the faith
That when the sun has shined, then God has
smiled!

The joyous lark, high-mounted on his song,
Has lifted me in rapture from the sod;
And though I tarry, humble in the grass,
I am a little while the guest of God!

And like this untaught winged heart of song,
Sweeter for liberty, the breezes fill
The vale with holy incense of the flowers,
And consecrate the altar of the hill.

The sunlit altar of the hill, far up
The pillared aisles of arching ash and pine,
Where Nature offers daily sacrifice,
And Night and Day keep watch before her
shrine.

And now, at eve, the priestly hour has donned
A purple vestment for the vesper mass;
The stars have lit the tapers of the dew,
And hare and lark are kneeling in the grass.

Throstles intone the offertory note,
And lo! upon the altar-hill of gray,
A blood-red host—the sacrificial Sun—
The immolation of a dying day!

ART

A stupid worm, with universal scorn
Impending every mention of her name,
Obedient to the impulse of her lame
Instinct, suspended from a sword of corn
Her weight of ugliness; and from the torn
Flat of the blade a coffin wove, wherein
She hid herself in sleep. But through the thin
Wall of her slumber-cell encroached the morn
Of summer. Sun and motive of the world,
Like master artisans, within that house
Patterned and built and painted, till the dry
Promise of Autumn, like a bud uncurled,
Let all the glory of the seasons loose,
And gave it wing—a gorgeous butterfly!

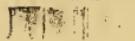
THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

(Summer Version.)

The oriole hangs in the apple
 His cradle of gauze and down,
And rallies a song of sunshine
 Out of the country and town:
But lighter than note of the ruby throat
 Is the song that Miranda sings
When out in her cool, green hammock
 She gracefully rocks and swings.

The spider has stretched his hammock
 Of soft and delicate skein
To tangle the trysting fire-fly
 That blunders upon the scene;
But on her veranda the coy Miranda
 Swinging and singing I spy—
Ah! she is the cunning spider,
 And I am the tangled fly!

Her music has lured me to prison;
 Her beauty has bade me stay,
And snared, and meshed, and tangled,
 I never shall get away
From moonlit veranda and dreamy Miranda—
 No matter, for love I die;
My sweetheart's the cunning spider,
 And I am the tangled fly!



THE BUILDERS

Empires are frail mosaics, made of men;
 One man's a flower, one the border-edge,
 And one the vivid figure of the heart;
All are the slaves of unity, and when
 Decay unsettles the obscurest wedge,
 The whole dependent pattern falls apart!

WINTER BLOSSOMS

When blossoms fell about me in the merry month
of May,

And trembled in the grasses at my feet,
I fared as one who cared not for the honey
scented spray—

The delicate, the beautiful, the sweet.

The apple shed her tinted snow; the conscious
blushing peach

Scattered her hints of love and spring
around—

Alas, my heart had budded, but the fruit was out
of reach;

Love lay, a brother blossom, on the ground.

When blossoms fell about me, I had little care
for them,

Their priceless perfume wasted on the air,
Or how they closed and faded, like the glimmer
of a gem,

When buried in its silk and satin lair.

I saw the drought destroy them, and I saw the
hot winds kill,

Nor had for them a prayer, a tear, a sigh—

Alas, I needed all my strength of heart to
smother still

The pity for myself that would not die!

But now the winter winds are come; no longer
do I roam

The orchard fields in summer's hues bedight;
The branches of the clouds have showered
meadow, lane, and home

With winter's frosty flowers in the night.

And now—strange thought!—since love before
my fire is warm again,

And I have summer at my heart today,
When'er December's blossoms fall upon my win-
dow pane,
I weep for those that perished in the May!

A FANCY

When night has given a color to the wind,
And trembling stars a spirit to the dark,
You linger, like an everlasting spark—
The Soul of Sorrow, in her ash enshrined.

When the gray sea is settled in her sound,
I think I hear you calling on the shore;
But I have answered, and the voice is more
The salt of laughter aching in a wound.

Deep in the autumn wood of paling brown
A toss of golden ringlets do I spy?—
Ah! no, but, like my golden hopes that die,
A leaflet, bruised and broken, falling down.

Serene and proud has Memory kept her light,
Burning her heart the while with her own
flame;
Too true to give Forgetfulness her name,
Too wise to hide her glory in the night.

Memory and I—each both, and never one;
She living on the sweetness cast away,
I dying with her visit all the day—
And each to each companion, but alone!

For all the heavy fathoms of the sea,
And all the gentle hints of leaf and star
Are idle, love, until your whispers are
Once more the sweet interpreters for me.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH SAMMY BROWN?

I wonder what is wrong these days
With little Sammy Brown?
If he don't mend his ways, he'll be
The queerest boy in town!
We've been a-guessin' fer a week—
I wonder if it's girls!
Why, he ain't out of knee-pants yet,
An' sailor hats an' curls!

That Sammy Brown—he used to hate
The girls as bad as snakes;
But now he tells 'em where the mud
Is best fer pies, an' makes
Their little stoves to bake 'em in—
An' that there Annie Kerr,
He buys her candy, an' he'd jest
Do anything fer her!

When we git up a circus now,
No use to count on HIM,
'Cause girls won't tumble in the hay—
An' he won't go to swim;
But if we play at keepin' store
You ought to see him—My!
He's ready fer THAT game, you bet,
'Cause girls can come to buy!

I mind the time if Annie Kerr
Or any of the girls
'D speak to Sammy Brown, he'd make
A face, an' toss his curls;
But now, when we're a-hangin' on
Behind a load of hay,
If he sees Annie, off he gits,
To go with HER an' play!

He used to make the finest slings
Of any boy in town—
When mine was broke, I always went
To little Sammy Brown ;
An' he could yell, an' scratch an' fight,
Jest like a dog or cat ;
But now he wants to play at house,
An' girlie games, like that !

An' yesterday, when we had called
Him out to play at bear,
He peeked around the house, and asked
If Annie'd be there.
Then all the fellows laughed at him ;
We had to tell him "NO,"—
He said he had to chop some wood,
An' guessed he couldn't go !

The gang was there, and all the dogs,
An' so we didn't care
That Sammy wouldn't go along—
'Cept we was short a BEAR !
We had to give the huntin' up,
An' stick right in the town—
An' all because of Annie Kerr,
An' little Sammy Brown !

That's jest the way each evenin' now—
A-comin' home from school,
Up in the wagon loft, or down
Around the swimmin' pool,
Out in the picnic wood, or round
On any street in town—
Unless that Annie Kerr's along,
We can't git Sammy Brown !

LOVE'S HERALDRY

Ah, he will come to-night! I know the signs.
The marble moon is rosen-ringed; the vines

Take up the wind's prophetic heraldry:
Deeper the curtsy of the columbines.

Upon my lips the garden berries leave
Such flavors strange and sweet as do deceive
Their leafy parentage; a whip-poor-will
Sings on the cote where doves are wont to grieve.

A star falls out of heaven, and the arc
Of following fire—an Eros finger-mark
Of glory—shines to guide my love to me
Out of the desert of dividing dark.

A thrush, with twilight canticle unspent,
Unstops his throat in sleepy wonderment,
And sings a dream—a dream that is a call
From waiting heart to heart awaited sent.

A subtle sound I fancy everywhere;
A footfall soft as flowers on summer air
Awander; or the step of jasmine, heard
Climbing, on tendril-feet, a stony stair;

The spirit sounds of silence love combines
With bird-dream, nod of flower, and whispering
vines—

Of love the faint, prophetic heraldry—
Ah, he will come to-night! I know the signs.

CUPID'S INDUSTRY

Dan Cupid is an artisan,
For every day I see
Him go to labor at his trade
In a match factory!

THE ABIDING LOVE

Woo me, love, with the passionate words
Of the mating nightingale,
The yearning call of the mother herds,
Or the seas that never fail;
But win me, love, with a softer song
And a deeper, dearer art,
And hold my love secure and long
With a whisper from your heart.

Woo me, love, as a fiery sun
That burns in the summer sky
And weaves a blush on the delicate-spun
Clouds that are drifting by;
But win me, love, with the hidden ray
Of the stronger, nobler mind
That shall look into my heart for ay,
And leave its light behind.

Woo me, sweet, with a twilight kiss,
In the wonder of new love
That breaks from its maiden chrysalis,
Like stars from the dark above;
But win me, dear, and hold me fast—
Like a moon that shall withstand
Each shadowy night, until the last—
With the touch of a gentle hand.

Woo me, love, in a close embrace,
When the wind is from the south,
When the thrill of your hair is on my face,
And your breath is on my mouth,
But win me, love, with the golden thread
Of comradeship for life,
And hold me still, when the fire is dead,
In the bonds of a faithful wife!

THE TWO CASKETS

There's a leaden casket down in my heart,
That is heaping with heavy things—
The stones I have gathered along the way,
The thorns I have plucked from day to day,
And the heart's own broken strings;
But I've hidden that casket low and deep
From the guess of day and the reach of sleep
And snapped the lock on the sombre keep,
And thrown the key away.

There's a golden casket down in my heart,
That is full of a treasure glow—
The smiles that have greeted me on the way,
The roses that bloomed, and, sweeter, stay
In a scented afterblow;
And the treasures break from this golden keep,
Through the risk of day and the guess of sleep,
And I slip the lock and I spy and peep,
For it's open night and day!

THE REAL BANSHEE

Out there on that old tree—
Night's blackest wing—
You sit and croak at me,
Dark thing.
I've heard poor singers try to sing,
Poor players play ;
But never heard the poorest fling
Their notes that way.
Your voice, your word,
I never heard
Of anything
Quite so absurd—
Old bird !

Now, cock your evil eye.
It's always night
In your black heart—that's why
The white
In other souls upsets your gaze
And turns your head.
I tell you, nightly bird, your ways—
When all is said—
Have sadly blurred
The raven herd
For all it's days—
So I've inferred—
Old bird !

I often look at you,
On that old tree ;
You seem some ghost, you do,
Some black Banshee,
Set yonder, like a dismal star,
A spirit dread,
To curse me, living, from afar,

And steal me, dead.
Art waiting, so?
Or just a low,
Benighted bird—
I'd like to know—
Jim Crow?

THE PREY OF THE GREYHOUND

A Banksman sat in his dumpy yawl,
A blur in the Breton mist,
And hooked the squid on a dripping trawl
With a weather-beaten fist;
He rhymed his lore to the rise and fall
Of his dory on the swell,
And strained his ear for the schooner's call,
And her horn and signal bell.

A greyhound leaped from the hidden West,
A rose of foam at her heaving breast,
And a chalk-line in her wake—
A thing of gray from the West and South,
A curl of smoke in her funnel mouth,
And pride in her bilge and rake.

The Captain fumed on the weather-deck
Of the huge leviathan,
And spread his wrath by bawl and beck
From man to answering man;
He set his lips to the megaphone,
And cursed at the spinning log;
The giant hulk with a shiver and groan
Leaped onward through the fog.

The slickered blur in the dumpy yawl
Whistled and yanked at the dripping trawl,
 And turned at the tholes to yell
An answer back from the drag and dip
Of the trawl and tide to the fishing ship
 And her horn and signal bell.

The lookout screamed on the liner's bridge—
 The Captain heard a wail,
And saw a speck on the foaming ridge
 Go by the starboard rail.
A shout of shame from the crowded deck!
 The Captain read his log,
And shook his head at the sinking wreck
 Far back in the dismal fog.

And the thing of gray steered on from Death
With never the catch of a single breath,
 In stern tranquility;
While the Captain scribbled in her log:
“Ran down a Banksman in the fog,
 Off Sable Island lee!”

EAST OR WEST

He rises with the morning sun
 Who makes of time his creed,
And rescues from the crumbling hours
 The day's immortal deed.

Or he may sink himself as low
 As evening's sunken sun,
If he forsake the dying day
 And leave the deed undone.

PERSEVERANCE

Hope hid the timidity of doubt,
And knocked again where she had been
A suppliant for years and years—
But never yet had entered in.

Then Faith, aroused from dreams at last,
Opened the door. "Ah, I had been
Sleeping," she said, "until you knocked;
But you are welcome—enter in!"

KEEPING THE LOG

Love is the anchor of my little ship;
Shall it secure me in a quiet dock,
Or, dragging deep, retard a fortune trip,
And chain me to destruction on the rock?

Love is the wind that drives my bark at sea;
Shall it be but a breeze behind the sail?
Or night's almighty tempest shall it be,
And leave me but a relic of the gale?

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE GRASS

'Tis the birthday of the grass;
Far along the river rim,
Where the argosies of bubbles
Dance in happy wedded couples,
And the minnow and the bass
Down the eddies float and swim,
There the world—thrice royal queen—
Dips her petticoat of green
In the running waters;
And the diamonds of the dew
Deck her royal garments too,
Till her jealous daughters—
Stars and planets of the skies—

Signal with their twinkling eyes
Down the dawn: " 'Tis come to pass;
'Tis the birthday of the grass!"

Up the meadow slope and shoulder,
Down the cheery cherry lane
Baby grass is growing bolder—
'Tis a rival to the grain!
Unafraid of summer's sickle—
Mowing wind and cutting hail—
Childish faith it has that fickle
Mother seasons never fail,
And that though the seasons wander
Far into the fields of snow,
Spring and summer shall meander
Back along the roads they know,
And, like older brother-laddies
Gathered round a baby-lass,
Pause upon the wind, and wonder
At the birthday of the grass!

Green and gentle on the lawn,
To the door-way creeping on,
Sly, it groups and huddles;
But the little patches spread;
Some are peeping out ahead,
Drinking at the puddles.
Ah! the fairies in the sod
Bring this miracle to pass—
Nay, while fairies sleep and nod,
'Tis the gentle wish of God
Brings the birthday of the grass!

ILLUSIONS

Yon rainbow painted on the summer sky,—
A seeming arch from mountain to the main,—
When Science put her glass unto my eye,
Was but a sun ray in a drop of rain!

A cloud that hung above my happy day,
And seemed to bring the dark of night too
near,
When Heaven flashed a light across my way,
Was but a ray of doubt within a tear!

HER PARLOR LAMP

Of all the treasured ornaments
That grace my lady's room,
From vellum books and vases rare
To satin pampas plume
Above a marble Artemis,
Her lamp I dearest love—
Her lamp with dragon heads below,
And crimson shade above.

Not for its shiny bowl I love
Her lamp with crimson shade,
Not for the dragon heads of bronze
With garnet eyes inlaid,
Not that I greet her reading 'neath
Its glimmer after toil—
I love her parlor lamp because
It holds so little oil!

For once, when she had trimmed the wick,
And burned it half the night,
It fluttered out!—If Love be blind,
What need of any light?

Could I resist the warm, sweet mouth,
 My lips so very near it?—
If Cupid didn't see that kiss,
 He had a chance to hear it!

THE CIRCLE OF SONG

My song, it cannot always be the new—
 Some gem that bubbles from a fountain spring
Through all the ages hidden from the few
 That tarry in the rarer heights to sing.

For it must be that if I sing the song
 Of peace and war, and beauty, love and hate,
Some echoes I shall overtake ere long—
 For many hearts are born in duplicate!

THE MAGICIAN

A tiny seed, an inch of humble dust,
 A drop of rain—then smiling summer shows
How strong the union of her little things,
 And gives a fragrant birthright to the rose.

AT THE FORD

Here, where the ford runs shallow,
 Though the flood be swift and wide,
There is footing sure from shore to shore,
 And safety in the tide.

The foam on the howling current,
 And the water-wail you hear
Are signs that the surge is weak and thin,
 And the bottom boulders near.

Up by the leaky ferry,
Where the tide is still and deep,
The filmy eyes of danger and death
A ceaseless vigil keep.

Down where the flood is narrow
The souls of all that pass
Are snared in the fingers of the crag
And the hair of the river grass;

But here, where the ebb runs shallow,
Though the ford be swift and wide,
The way is safe from shore to shore
Over the tireless tide.

Heart-deep your brother pilgrims
In the tossing rapids stand
To help you on with a guiding word
And up with a helping hand.

And if perchance in darkness
You come to the river edge,
A light is gleaming from eve till dawn
To show you the rock and sedge.

That light is the fire of virtue,
Burning wherever you roam,
And the pilgrim hand is the inner voice
That is come to lead you home.

Oh, follow the fire! Oh, follow
The hand of the brother guide—
And you shall cross from the shade of night
To the safe and sunny side!

THE PHYSICIAN

When summer breathes her breath on bush and bower,
When dales are dry, and hills are ashen-browed,
When sickness falls on bud and leaf and flower—
Then comes the great physician of the cloud.

He counts the throbbing pulses of the air,
He scans the parching tongues of grass and tree,
Measures the fever of the lilies fair,
And dwells upon the proper remedy.

Then, heavenly old doctor, gruff but kind,
The thunders of his grumbling scarce begin,
Ere he has brought his surest cure to mind—
And, drop by drop, pours out his medicine!

A MAIDEN'S QUESTIONS

Where I a fragrant lily
And you a bee,
Would you, an ardent suitor,
Fly to me?

And if you found me sweeter
Than clover breeze,
Would you forsake the lowlands
And the leas?

And if you stole the honey
Out of my heart,
Would you take up your booty
And depart?

THE COAL MINER

With one deep step he quits the life of light,
And, ghoul-like, stalks among the ages' cribs
To lance the dark and sulphurous veins of night
 And sap the heart-fire from her slated ribs.
Weaker than flesh and fibre of the mine,
Less than the atom-shards of flying dust,
Serene he comes to pillage Vulcan's shrine
 For warmth of fireside on the greenland crust.

Or he may step into this darkened door—
A prey that Death has set her eyes upon—
To cut his swan-song in the tunnel-core,
 His echoing pick unsilenced till the gnawn
Ribs of the world unloose their secracies
In thunderbursts of pent-up centuries!

DESTINY

“By new paths I will scale the hills of Fate,”
Saying, he went strange ways, no brother near :
But, smiling at the goal, Fate said to him :
“The way I marked, you trod to meet me
 here !”

THE SEA

Thou fordless gulf, almighty at my feet,
Bitter comparison of toil and rest,
I know not is it wise or is it sweet
To weep, or sing, beside thee—Which is best?

The undertow of ages fills thee up;
And yet, thy rock lipped bays are gaping wide
For tribute of the foaming billow cup,
And booty of the yellow channel tide.

Immeasurable masts are bent and broke
Deep in thy breast, O, water hearted sea!
Nor pricked thy conscience though the corals
choke
The bones of all the sepulchres in thee.

Nor shall return, of all the buried dead,
Not one from all the tempests, storms and
fears
To carve a wrinkle on thy calm-healed head,
Or set a sign of ravage on thy years.

Across thy bar a homing ship comes in;
Beyond the rebel shoals a sail goes out—
The one thy gentle harbor safe within,
The other sinking into mist and doubt.

Nor have I faith that thou wilt rest tonight,
Because one sail has anchored safe, O sea!—
Thy majesty, thy miracle, thy might
Is thy immutable uncertainty.

That sail departing to the closing mist
Let me not follow to uncertainty,

But this old hulk, upon the sand, which kissed
The serf a last farewell unwillingly.

How sweet for her, to know, her labor done,
That, though the wildest winds that e'er made
sport
Of man and ship assailed her, she has won—
And brought her cargoes safely into port!

This is my hope, old ocean, O, how sweet,
To dream that, like yon old reclining mast,
I shall survive the rock and storm, and greet
Upon the gleaming shore, the sun at last!

A MAID AND A MAN

He—

I sailed the silver lake with her to-day,—
She that is famed for riches of the earth;
But I, who love her, hid my love away,
And hushed my yearning with a careless mirth.

I conned the ease and comfort of her life;
Her beauty, could it bear the storms with
me?—

Dear heart, I dare not claim thee bride and wife,
For I am wedded unto Poverty!

She—

I sailed the silver lake with him to-day,—
He that is famed for gallantry and truth;
I saw his manly muscles lift and play,
Tanned by the sun, and lean and strong with
youth.

I measured out the riches of his life—
A heart content, and youth and strength and
health—

O love, be quick to claim me bride and wife,
And let me share the bounty of thy wealth!

CUPID THE TRAVELLER

I saw a maiden and a man
Go sailing out to sea,
And by the tiller stood the God
Of Love, a skipper wee;
I saw a clasp of trembling hands
Upon the starboard rails,
Two heads together bent and touched—
Cupid sails!

I saw a dainty form in white
Row down by shadowy shores,
A pair of strong and brawny arms—
But not upon the oars!
Two shadows on the glassy pool
I saw them part and close,
Like puppet-lovers on a screen—
Cupid rows!

I saw a figure trim and neat,
Another lithe and strong,
Ride through the brown October wood,
Astir with autumn song;
Under an arch of bended pines
They cantered, side by side,
Love's palfrey keeping step between—
Love can ride!

I saw a vision like a cloud
Of billowy lace, with sparks

Of starlight flashing, and a man
Go by me in the parks;
The maiden's eyes were on the ground,
And his—but silence talks;
Ah me, what tireless feet has Love—
Cupid walks!

I saw a tilted parasol
Beside the ocean green,
And under it a summer pair
Who used it for a screen;
The maiden's hair was wet—and it
Had caught and tangled him;
He took to water to escape—
Cupid can swim!

JUNE

The year hath touched the sweetest note of all
The sounds that set the seasons into tune,
And fingers of the wind and summer fall
In rhapsodies across the chords of June.

Illimitably softened, as a smile
Comes after sorrow, steals the silent rain,
To tremble down the daisy eye a while,
And ring the dipping poppy bowl again.

A new confusion burns the rose's cheek,
Aglow with dimpled petal blushes pink;
Love stirs the sleepy sedges by the creek,
And moves the heavy laurel buds to think—

Thoughts that are songs, unuttered to the ken
Of all, save such as in the inviting hours
Can quit the noisy intercourse of men,
And listen to the language of the flowers.

THE LITTLE TRAMP

I know a little vagabond,
A naughty little tramp,
Who journeys here and journeys there
In weather fair and damp.
In rain and snow and diamond dew
And days of Summer shine
I meet this little vagabond,
This little tramp of mine.

Sometimes he comes with tattered frock
And step that limps and lags
For balm and cure and rest and peace—
My little tramp in rags;
Sometimes he comes to me and begs
With lifted lips, a kiss:
Ah! would the world had more and more
Of beggary like this!

No matter where he runs or roams
So near he is to me,
In spirit do I follow him—
To brook and apple tree,
To cosey corner, cherry lane
And every haunt he knows—
The paradise of bird and bee,
The daisy and the rose.

Sometimes the weary pilgrim feet
In grasses thick and deep
Are tangled, and the swallows sing
The little tramp asleep.
Then comes a giant, in his dream,
Who missed him at his play—
Ah! giant arms that love him so,
And carry him away!

How can he wander far from me?
How can he long depart,
When every step he takes doth leave
An imprint on my heart?
No song he sings, no trip he makes,
No thought or plot or plan
Without I hear the echo of
The babe—and boy—and man!

Come, little beggar, to my door.
Come nearer—to my breast.
Love is the charity I give,
And mother's love—the best.
I call you "little vagabond,"
And "naughty little scamp,"
But, Oh, the love, my baby boy—
My darling little tramp!

SONG OF THE SWALLOW

A circle in the summer wind,
A star of song and feather,
A little arrow head of blue,
The vane of golden weather;

An opal flame, a jet of spray
About a sunny fountain,
I skim the wind wave of the wheat,
The mizzen masted mountain.

A fellow of my wheeling flight,
The soul of speed and glitter—
Oh hear the gush of rising song,
The glad, high-hearted twitter.

Till, like a bullet from the sun,
I shoot beneath the rafter,

And, in the chorus of a nest,
The twitter turns to laughter.

A silt of silver frost will make
My singing low and sober
And send me southward with the brown
Memory of October.

A little breath of cloudless air,
A whispered hint of summer,
Will bring me back and make of me
Spring's merriest newcomer.

THE BROTHER

Accoutered for the long campaign of life,
I listened to the Captain of my heart:
"Thy temple choose—the hive of Industry,
The house of Science, or the fane of Art!"

I chose the last. I knocked upon the gate
For years before it opened unto me;
And when the rusty hinges turned at last,
Another also entered—Poverty!

THE EMBERS

You think, because the rocket, mounting high,
Brings back no trail of splendor to the ground,
That it has fixed its glory in the sky—
But morning dawns, and then the ash is found!

You think, because the glory men have won
Gives them a rocket splendor, they are bound
Unto the stars; but 'neath each fragile sun
The unseen ashes eddy to the ground!

DAWN

To sunless life the dreaming gulls awake!

Frail rosaries of clouded amethyst
The paddles of a hundred dories shake
Over the sleeping waters, veiled in mist.

A fisher laddie dips his oar, and sings
An answer to a barking village dog;
The startled boats unfold their chill wet wings,
And disappear, affrighted, in the fog!

A TWILIGHT TRYST

Disguised in cloak of shadow, twilight comes,
Tiptoeing down a lane of hedging stars,
To tryst her lover, day, where he awaits
Her greeting at the low Horizon bars

Of purple cloud and gap of golden sky;
He feels her breath unto his lips aspire—
Her breath of scented dew. Her shadowy brow
Glowes with an astral gem of Venus fire!

She blushes at his silent parting kiss,
And ere he turns his face unto the west,
She reaches o'er the bars of cloud, and pins
A red chrysanthemum upon his breast—

A red chrysanthemum—the blood-red sun;—
Her token as he leaves her, all forlorn,
Whereby to prove his love. Ah, he shall wear
It burning on his bosom in the morn!

THE FIRE-FLY

Jupiter's bolts have splintered in the night,
And down the folds of shadow-curtained scars
Yon nervous lantern, with a limping light,
Copies the cunning strategy of stars!

Faint as the dye of bluets washed in dew
And bleached with ghostly visits of the sun,
The bashful splendor blushes into view,
And Erebus and Chaos are undone!

A moment burns the little heart of fire!
A moment point the Taurus tips in vain!
And every nerve of Fate, with quaint desire,
Is throbbing at that glimmering window pane.

And wondering eyes from the wide rim of night
Have narrowed to the strain of nearing stars,
For, measured in this miracle of light
Is all the awe of Luna, Earth and Mars.

The fiery breathings of a mountain throat
That streak the heights where clouds career
and clinch,
Here flutter over bog and dingle moat—
As perfect in the wonders of an inch.

The gap, in summer twilight, broken through
With sunshine's last escapement of the day,
I see it when this tiny midnight crew,
Flashing their signals, tremble up the bay.

I see the laughter-light in woman's eye,
Caught up from some commiserating glance,
And cast into the glimmer of a fly
To vanish on the wings of circumstance.

I see the fires of Envy smothered low
Under the olive branch of peace and rest—
Only to leap the higher when they throw
The branches, withered, from the waking
breast.

Not here burn lowly flames of altar oil,
Guarding the mysticisms of a creed,
But on the sanctuary of the soil,
Before the humble worship of the reed.

And sacred as the vestal fire of Rome,
This little mimic of a star half-done
Shall light the lattice of its woodland home
Till seasons move the summer from the sun.

Eyes that have matched the diamond and the dew,
Lips that have measured blushes with the rose,
Shall link the fire-fly with the stars as true
And ponder on the majesty it shows.

And he that farthest sees the fainting gleam
And reads its lighted message on the sod,
The best interpreter of heaven's dream
Is he, and wanders nearest to his God !

THE BIRTH OF THE DAISIES AND THE STARS

Ere eye had guessed the hanging dots of space,
Or glass had settled path and planet there,
The earth and sky, in battle's hot embrace,
Made riot in the regions of the air.

The heaven shot its hail of fire and shaft,
The earth a million blazing missiles hurled,
And over all, the wind of tempest laughed
In wanton, giggling circles round the world.

The wrath of wind and lightning are at rest;
But what a wonder lingers in the scars!—
Daisies half buried in the meadow breast,
The fire of anger burning in the stars!

THE POET'S CORNER IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

What need of sculptured bust and chiseled name
For these? The dust of death is not their
doom,
Nor marble mask, nor versicle of fame
Can seal their omnipresence in a tomb.

An echo, not an effigy, shall give
The children of the harp perpetual birth;
Why bury them in granite, when they live
In every nook and corner of the earth?

A QUATRAIN OF GOOD LUCK

I found a four-leaved clover on a green
Old meadow rug, spread out before the hearth
Of morning's sun. Said I: "What can it mean—
This quatrain of good luck, of joy and mirth?"

But ere that sun had burned to evening ash,
Each quarter-leaf had given me a share:
A love to keep, a friend to trust, a flash
Of life's achievement, and a heart to dare!

THE PINES

High as the farthest hope of men
The pines are reaching up—
Above the maze of moor and fen,
And sunny buttercup,
Mounting from meadow to the sky
With spicy odors sweet
To lay upon the lap of clouds
And at the angel feet.

Far as the flight of startled crows
The pinnacles of green
Are risen, and the welkin grows
A veil of tangled skein
Where the pale light is pointing through
In bars and broken lines
With tresses of the sun, to thread
The needles of the pines.

High as the rim of skirting dawn
The slender fingers lay
The touch of human mercy on
The nestlings, ere they play
The part of joy and happy song
And June and summer glee,
Which lift the spirit up, and bring
The heaven down to me.

High as the highest hope of men
The pines are reaching up;
But down, below the tufted fen,
And smiling buttercup,
Their rootlets, like the human heart,
Win from the humble sod
The life and strength and noble aim
Which lift them up to God!

SONG OF THE BLOSSOM

I lifted up my timid face
Out of a hood of white,
When lo! the morning orchard place
Was flooded with a holy light;
And ere I rallied from the fright
To guard my spotless virgin grace
The lover sun, without a word or wink,
Gave me a welcome at the door of May—
A long, warm kiss—I could not bid him
nay—
And on my cheek there glowed a blush of pink!

All through the hours of summer shine
The lover sun was near.
The blossom grew a pippin fine,
And every smile and every tear
Of summer brought responsive cheer,
Or sadness to my heart—the shrine
Of the deep sun's most inward thought—till wet
With his departing tears, I turned a cheek
To his farewell—and many a crimson streak
Tells where that parting kiss is lingering yet!

MY CLUB

When flotsam and the jetsam of the day
Are done, and all the rack of toil and rub
Of care and trouble, then I love to seek
The joys and lulling comforts of my club.

A wraith of smoke about me drawing near
The rarest dreams of pipe and subtle weed ;
A friend to follow fancy, and detain
Her visions when they threaten to recede.

A hand to take my own, and so release
The cold and soulless grasp for fame and gold ;
A voice to melt the jargon of the street
And soothe me to the heartsome peace of old.

A little castle built around a fire,
Where love is burning on a cheery hearth
And weaving on her lustrous andirons
The starlight and the sunbeams of the earth :—

These are the joys, and this the heavenly place
I seek when toil and trouble, rack and rub
Of day are done, and like an oriflamme
At evening burns the window of my club.

And every night a woman welcomes me—
A radiant woman, waiting at the door,
To tell the tiny secrets of herself,
And coax me tell my own to her once more.

Perhaps a rowdy little baby boy
Comes, laughing, then, and climbs upon my
knee,

Shares the caresses of the mother-hand,
And begs a story, "bout a bear," from me.

A child, a woman, in a club! Ah, yes;
I vowed my club was heaven—could it compare
With paradise if it were womanless,
And never a baby cooed and gamboled there?

Here, where I hold my revel, every night
A babe, a woman greet me when I come
And comfort me, with pipe and book and friend;—
The only club I ever knew—is home!

A MOTHERHOOD UNIVERSAL

Oh, the spider, mother spider,
Has her cradle in the grass,
Made of silken web and silver
Sunbeams plaited as they pass;
And the summer breeze is rocking
Baby spider in the net,
'Tween a drowsy poppy blossom
And a purple violet!

Oh, the oriole is singing
By her cradle in the tree,
Woven dandelion satin
And a leafy filigree;
And the gentle wind is rocking
Baby orioles that dream
In the nursery of summer,
To the music of a stream.

Spin your cradle, mother spider!
Rock your baby, mother bird!
In another downy cradle
Little feet and hands have stirred!
And I, who wish the singing mothers
Of the trees and grasses joy,
Must away to my own darling
Hungry little baby boy!

DIRECTION

Some thoughts, like shadows of receding crabs,
Seeming to blunder backward, blind and lame,
At last arrive at some secluded goal—
And then we see how straight has been their
aim!

A SONG OF SUMMER

I am the child of the sunny skies,
The life that was born of spring,
Come into the heart of glen and mere
And the soul of everything.
I hurry the sap of hazel boughs
To the promised nuts of brown,
And I draw the doubled oak limbs up,
And I drill the rootlets down.

I blush in the pippin's cheek of red,
I glow in the pink of peach;
I give my hand to the fern and vine,
And I give my heart to each.
I lift my eyes when the gentian lifts
Her eye of a magic blue,
And when the poppy speaks of rain
I tell of the tempest, too.

The miracle gift of life am I,
The birth of the bud and seed,
The thought that opens the timid rose,
The laughter that rocks the reed;
An undertow' in the summer sea
Of daisies that dip and nod,
And the beauty mark of centuries
In the handiwork of God.

THE FIRST SNOW

All night I heard the penitent wind
Confessing to the blast;
And shriven, as a soul absolved,
The world is pure at last.

Nuns at a shrine of crystal carved,
The pines are bending low,
Their fingers clasped in silent prayer,
On beads of silver snow.

Beads that are told by morning winds
Like rosaries at mass,
And counted, one by one, and dropped
To the white-surpliced grass.

To hide from winter's touch austere
Till May is come again
With the warm impulse of the sun
And kisses of the rain.

Then shall this morning's frozen prayer
Be melted to the plea
Which makes the laughter in the brook,
The singing in the sea.

It shall inflate the honey drop
Upon the lily tongue,
And cool the thrush's throbbing throat
When bursts the passion song.

To marsh and meadow it shall bring
The magic of the dew,
The lilac and the marigold,
The rose-bud and the rue.

So winter, with its breath of ice,
And breast of frozen sea
Brings back the summer and the sun,
The love and song to me.

HATE

Love, having shot an arrow at a heart,
Repenting, tried to draw it forth—too late!
For Time had grown a barb upon the dart,
And ever since they call that arrow Hate.

THE PEARL FISHERS

Impatient at his fortune on the beach,
One fisherman forsook the printed sands,
To seek for pearls beyond the common reach—
At twilight he returned with empty hands.

But one, confiding in the ocean's mood,
Waited the tidal shells—in one of them,
Beached where the faithless fisherman had stood,
He found a shining, rare and priceless gem!

DAY OF THE AUCTION SALE

The farmer-folk come over the hill,
And up from the neighboring vale,
To bid and bargain for, and buy
The last of my goods for sale!
The posters out on the countryside
Said: "Everything must go!"—
But I'll have to turn my eyes away
From one poor bid, I know.

One cheap little bid of a mother young,
Who lives a mile to the west;
She has come to bid my cradle in
For the babe upon her breast—
The cradle bought for a mother-bride
And a babe of love's first dawn—
I'll have to turn my eyes when I hear
That "Going-going-gone!"

I remember how the song of the lark
In the sky came trembling down
The morning I brought the little crib
In my wagon out from town!
The daisies curtsied along the road,
And the thrushes took a peep—
I know they guessed that the tiny bed
Was a nest for a baby's sleep!

And while the larks and the thrushes piped
In the morning diamond-dewed,
The mother sang by her downy nest
And the baby crowed and cooed;
Till the baby's fancy passed away
One night on a starry gleam,
And the mother followed him, to hear
The end of his little dream!

What need of a house and a cradle now?
What need of a nest for me?—
The silence is my only mate,
And my babe is memory!
I give the crib to the mother young
With the babe on her breast at play—
But I'll have to turn my eyes, I know,
When she carries it away!

THE REVIVAL

War shot his bolts across a fertile land
And burned and bared it with a cannon's
breath,
Until it lay, a waste of barren sand,
A hollow-hearted spirit-place of death.

But the glad brook, forgetful of the war,
Boated strange seedlings to the grave of flow-
ers;
A bugle-wind the thistle called afar,
And smuggled in the diamonds of the showers.

Then war's revival! Bullets of the rain
Pelting the meadow, and a booming breeze!
But lo! what gentle hosts upon the plain:
Armies of flowers and a camp of trees!

THE PIRATE

I walked with Friendship for a ramble,
And all along the way
The trees and flowers and gleaming pebbles
Seemed loveliest that day.

Through wood and blossom-scented acre
We wandered, hand in hand;

At last we came unto the ocean,
And sailed away from land.

And then, like any reckless pirate,
Sure of the wind at sea,
Friendship unmasked his face and manner,
'Twas Love had stolen me!

At first, in doubt of death and danger,
I served in dread and fear;
Ere long I learned to trust my master,
And followed far and near.

And when there came the hour of parting
For ransom on the shore—
I threw myself upon his bosom,
And left him nevermore!

IF NATURE KNEW

Were I the brook, and you came down to me,
And set your feet on my adoring pebbles,
And stood upon the bridge above my bab-
bles,
I would not pass, a singer, to the sea,
But drop on drop, a host of little rebels,
My waters would rush back, and, flower-sweet,
Deepen—a sea of dew-drops at your feet!

Were I the cloud, and you came out, my love,
And walked with face uplifted to the heaven,
The loaded thunder-guns I'd spike, the seven
Signs of the rain take down, and from above
The roof of storms, a burst of light, sun-
driven,
Your heaven I would arch with splendid stain—
A rainbow, unpreceded by a rain!

OPPORTUNITY

I wrought with tools I did not understand,
And shaped, by chance, the golden gifts I
hold—

But cannot duplicate with head or hand,
Because I threw away the pattern-mould.

BROTHERHOOD

High as the glimmer of a crystal star
The holy altitude of human good;
Diviner than the labor of the sun
The helping hand of human brotherhood.

I hear it in the chorus of the birds,
Dying, but never dead, the thinning tone;
For harmony gets help in every pause—
And not a singer trembles in the lone.

I see it in love's nested happiness,
Where sunny children circle at the fire,
Lifting the holy ecstasy of home
Above the highest promise or desire.

It watches in the safety of the stars,
Which ride the dangers of the dizzy sky
From maze to maze of space without a fear
That any fellow falter, fail, or die.

It minglest with the shower and the sun,
And twines the helping fingers of the May,
Which rub the folds and creases from the bud,
And start the timid fruitlet on its way.

I hear it when the capers of the wind,
Disguised for tragic hurricanes of harm,

Unmask—and are but zephyr breath and breeze—
The quiet brother-voices of the storm!

I hear it in the murmur of the sea,
Beaten and baffled, then renewed again
With strength imparted by a brother breast,—
Broken in turn to measure up the gain.

I feel it in the comfort of the wood,
Where stands the immutable and sentry pine,
His back a shelter for the fearsome fern,
His arms a staff for sapling, sprig, and vine.

But stronger than the lift of windy seas,
And mightier than the systems of the wood
That silent usher in the hearts of men
Who leads the way to Human Brotherhood!

THE HIDDEN LIGHT

Who that has looked into a woman's face,
Illumined with the fire of love, can say
That some divine inheritance of God
Has not been hidden in her heart of clay?

Hidden to every eye of mortal ken,
Till that sweet-weaponed violence occur
Which lifts the secret shutters of her soul,
And lets the mating sunshine in to her.

O, like a sun that nears the dawn in dark,
Her oriflamme may come with hidden light,
Nor let her read the letters of his shield
Till she has learned to love him in the night.

For love is but a sea of scented dark
Wherein two happy spirits, mad with doubt,

Seeking each other, flash their little fires
In burning signals as they roam about.

And who that looks upon a woman's face,
So lighted with the fire of love, can say
That some divine inheritance of God
Has not been hidden in her heart away

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

No guarding ghost, illusive as the air,
Dumb and invisible; no Seraph caught
Down from the millions Heaven has to spare—
The angel that is shadow to my lot.

Of clay divine, I follow, in her face,
A stronger light than Heaven's highest star,
And mold the noblest virtues from her grace,
Because I see and know them as they are.

The sinew of my arm, the heart that beats
Behind my purpose and the saintly voice
Above my deed and daring, she repeats
Herself in me—my chooser and my choice.

Not as a Seraph, humbled from the grace
Of Zion, was my guardian sent to me;
But as an angel who had found a place
Of love and comfort in my heart came she.

Not as a babe I took her, all unknown,
Denied the right to summon and prefer—
The guardian angel that I call my own,
I had a portion in selecting her!

THE MAKE-BELIEVES OF OLD AGE

When I was young I used to think
That all the tales I knew
About the Elves and Gnomes and Wunks
And Fairy Folk were true;
I thought that giants stalked abroad
To feed, and frown and fight;
That Pixies, Bugaboos and Dwarfs
Went roaming round at night.

And now, when I am growing old
In knowledge and in years,
I find my childish make-believes
And all my childish fears
Were true indeed;—for now I meet
The make-believes—the same
Fairy and Gnome, in friend and foe—
But each has changed his name!

The Dwarf is now a little man
Who lives not far from me,
With stunted principles and heart
No bigger than a pea;
And, next to him, the Giant grim
I knew and feared of old
Now follows in Misfortune's wake
And turns her tears to gold.

My Pixy of the years gone by
I now behold again—
A little boy who piles the snow
And paddles in the rain;
And when I see a troop of lads
Come romping down the street,
I see in them the Elves of old
With other heads and feet.

The Brownie Sprite who visits me
Since I have grown up—
Who puts the laughter in my dreams
And sorrow in my cup—
He is the mischief-loving Fate
That haunts me all the day
And, while I slumber, overturns
The milestones on my way.

My Fairy is a sunny girl
With footsteps light and free;
My Pigmy is a tiny hope
That flutters yet in me—
Ah, all the childish make-believes
With different form and name—
They come, disguised, and yet I know
That they are still the same!

THE VALLEY OF THE OHIO

Unto the old security of the wood
Echoed the tremors of a titan thrill;
Green trees that cloaked the shoulders of the
hill
Melted to homes and temples where they stood,
While arks that paddled where Adventure's mood
Dared and directed scoop and dredge and
drill
Anchored and slept, and came and went at
will
With cargoes of converting men and food;
Till sterile rock and sandy solitude,
Where swallows teased the basking water-
dog
And grackles fired the fen with wings of red,
Rang with the boomer's lusty interlude,
And out of furnace fire and wheel and cog
A lurid city raised her nimbus head!

MY NEIGHBORS

A little house, sequestered in a nook
Of leaves and blossoms; heaven's sunny dome
Above me; fellowship of flower and brook
Beside me—this I call my happy home.

Think you that I am lonely—that I pine
For ladyship of merrier retreat,
Fetish of fashion, and the whim of wine—
The mild audacities of shop and street?

Not so; for when I walk among the trees,
Jostling fern and frail anemone,
No street procession half so gay as these,
Nor dignified and courteous to me.

Cycles of song that rock a music house
And rise by paid ascensions up the scale
Would rough the mellow drumming of the
grouse,
The serenade of thrush and nightingale.

What cry or whistle of the mart and mill
Can stir the tender treble of the heart
Like summer's wind that whispers down the hill
The reasons why I never shall depart.

I would not quit my cottage in the wood
For courts beyond, nor heights of rare re-
move—
For every neighbor here is gay and good—
The cheery chums of happiness and love!

THE RAIN

A dozing cloud, of melting purple spun,
Awakes upon her bed of feathery skies.
By haunting dreams oppressed, her drowsy
eyes
Widen in childish wonder at the dun
Curtains that hang the chamber of the sun.
She hears the wind, with jargon lullabies
Shaking the house of blue eternities,—
The lightning beats her door with flash and stun!
Arising from her bed, the trembling cloud
Prays of the fiery stranger peace and rest—
Snatching the thunder-trumpet from his
breast,
He blows a deafening challenge, long and loud—
When, lo! the cloud, bewildered by her fears,
Opens her lips to speak—and bursts in tears!

AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE

Up the mountain, down the glen,
Winding through the city,
Wander-lovers, and forever—
Ran the ancient ditty;
But, reverse the olden story;
They have loved, but never met—
Sought each other in a weary
Journey never ended yet—
Aucassin and Nicolette.

On a merry tally-ho
She went up the mountain,
Passing him beside his palfrey,
Drinking at a fountain.
In a tower of Trade and Commerce,
Seeking each the other there,

He rode up the elevator,
While, divinely sad and fair,
Nicolette came down the stair !

Half concealed in veil and furs,
Sleighting with her brother,
Twice the maiden passed her lover—
Neither saw the other ;
For, while she, the faithful fairy,
Sought her lover in the sleigh,
He was on the elevated,
Like a timid, flying fay,
Traveling the other way !

Like a pirate, on his yacht,
He was lost forever
To his evanescent booty,
Boating down a river ;
Journey after weary journey
But revived the olden pain—
Nicolette upon the saddle,
Got a glimpse of him—in vain—
Aucassin was on a train !

And at last, while Nicolette
Searched an Alpine ranch,
Aucassin shot down the mountain
On an avalanche !
Ah, reverse the olden story ;
All in vain they wander yet ;
Seeking each the seeking other
Loving, though they never met—
Aucassin and Nicolette !

THE RAINDROPS ON THE WIRE.

A chill gray mist is falling all the day,
And by my window, on a sloping wire,
Gather the glow of hearth-stone, and the ray
Of lamplight into beads of liquid fire. . .

Then, drop by drop, the children of the rain
Tremble and travel down the wind-stirred
line ;—
Whether they pause, or lose in speed or gain,
Passing, they give the self-same countersign.

Whether they bear the journey out alone,
Or, overtaking each the other, blend,
Each loses every grace and charm its own—
Its form and color in a common end.

How like our lives unto the drops of rain !
Whether we travel down the way alone,
Pause in the journey, fail of speed or gain,
Dance in the sun, or tremble, tempest-blown,

We give the world a common countersign,
Passing her window lamplight, and we blend
With all the fellow pilgrims of our line
When we have reached our haven at the end !

TO EVANGELINE.

(Beneath the Old Willows at Grand Prè.)

Under these willows old, fair Maid of Grief,
I stand, a sister in this place of pain.

The kine are grazing here; the sunny grain
Has gilt the land with golden rick and sheaf;—
But every relic mound and willow leaf

Tosses a shadow down upon the plain,
As if to temper still,—and still in vain,—
The ravage of a joy that was so brief.
Into the shadow have I brought my heart;

I bow my head beneath the willows, too—
And not alone for ancient memory;
Evangeline, I bear the harder part,
For Death returned a lover unto you,
But stole the lover Life had given me!

TWO HOURS BY THE LUNI RIVER

I

Come, love! For haste the Luni waters moan—
The delicate heralds of my still desire.
Night blooms; her inflorescences of fire
Succor my weary eyes that watch alone.
Your shadow, let it cross the trembling zone
Of shoreland rushes, and your steps inquire
Where burbling bulbul tunes his vesper lyre,
For when you hear his song, you hear my own.
Your throbbing boat, my quiet bungalow,
How thick the shadows gather them between!
The impatient moments of this hour, how slow
They blend into the blur of the serene,
Like raindrops, oozing from a mountain snow,
That pause to quote the ages as they go!

II

Stay, love! The Luni waters lull and croon,
The bulbul flutters nearer with his lay,
And shadows creep the closer.—Stay, oh, stay!
Can love dissolve her ecstasies so soon?
Can night undo the magic of the moon,
Lead all the shepherds of the stars astray,
And tear you from my folding arms away,
In one short hour? Oh, fleeting little boon!
The bird that timed the hour I waited thee
Held every note a year—you came, you came,
Singing of love—the joy of instancy;
But scarce your greeting done—you sobbed my
name
In mute “Farewells!”—and love’s eternity
Follows you down the river to the sea!

RE-ENTERED.

I came to a hidden temple
In a fenny woodland drear ;
My sad heart murmured "somewhere,"
And the silence answered, "here."

Over the shadowy portal
The motto that stared at me,
Indelibly dark and carven,
Was a plainly lettered "thee."

I stole to the moldy cellar
And sipped of the webby wine ;
When I muttered "whose?"—the echo
Was blent with the answer, "thine."

I groped in the darkened closet,
And I climbed the creaking stair,
And winnowed the dusty silence
With a haunting "when" and "where?"

As I passed the tilted mirror
The image I chanced to see—
In the glass a graven mimic,—
Was the face and form of me.

I lifted the harp from the corner,
The lute from the leaning shelf,
And struck a song of the absent—
But the strings resounded, "self."

I stood by the crumbling chimney ;
"The logs that have burned away
I will light," I said, "to-morrow ;"
But the shadows said "to-day."

Foolish with all the wonder,
And afraid with all the awe,
I counted the sounds a master,
And the silences the law.

Out in the fenny woodland,
And down in the weedy bogs
I gathered the frosty faggots,
And trimmed the sapless logs.

Then out of the temple shadows,
And over the chimney mire
I kindled the ancient embers,
And fed and stirred the fire—

Until,—O sweetest wonder—
As I drove away the gloom,
I saw that the lonely temple
Was my own neglected room;

And the haunted chill and silence,
And the dusty pride and pelf
Were only the crying voices
Of my own forgotten self!

THE MAGIC OF A WORD

Only a little word
As the evening died away,
But it warmed a heart that had not known
Of kindness in the day.

Only a tiny seed
Dropt in the rounds of toil,
But where it fell a garden grew
And blossomed in the soil.

Only a timid star
Twinkled above the deed,
But heaven beheld through that lone eye
And blessed the random seed.

Only a grateful smile
Answered the higher spark,
But a love grew tender in the night
And riper in the dark.

Only a random thought
After the evening light,
But the thought was a rose delayed in bloom
Which blossomed in the night.

THE NIGHT SPIRIT

Is there a whisper on the night?
Listen, and it may say
Some tender word the noises hushed
In the day.

Some song above the clash of men,
Sacred in theme and tone,
That God may wish your soul to hear
When alone.

Some noble note you found beyond
The laughter song in you,
Now risen to the verge of dreams,
Strong and true.

Some spirit of a whispered curse,
Sent out on wings of fire,
Come back to lift the breath of prayer
From the mire.

Is there a whisper on the night?
Some echoes have withstood
The clamor in your heart, and chime
With the good.

Is there a whisper on the night
Listen, and it may tell
That after every storm of day
All is well.

THE WANDER-BOAT

Come into the wander-boat of dreams—
Of the dreams that never die—
And sail till the fingers of the sun
Reach out of the bending sky
And touch your eyes with a gladder gleam
And brighten your lifted face;
O love! bear out with the silver sail,
Till we rest in the harbor place.

Over the breast of the sunny tide
We drift in a course of light,
While watchers stand on the rugged shore
And battle the dragon, Night,
Who sometimes lifts his hideous head
Out of the river of dreams,

But never stirs where the silver sail
Of the wander-vessel gleams.

Out of the golden glow of dawn,
Like an orient-flaming priest,
The wander-boat sails on and on
To the heart of the waking East—
The great heart, flushed with the joy of things,
Where love is the depth of space—
Oh, that is the anchor bay for us,
And that is the harbor place!

THE GUIDE INVISIBLE

I never hear this silent guide
Say, “Follow me to-day,”
Nor see his faithful shadow fall
Before me on the way.

He never takes me by the hand
To lead o'er brook or bridge,
Or points a finger to the sun,
Red on the western ridge.

His face he never shows to me
When leading in the light;
His master-touch I never feel
When guiding me at night.

But as a glass assists, unseen,
The eye to better see,
My guide draws near and magnifies
All things on earth for me.

I sail the Seine; though never yet
I breathed in sunny France,
I see her women and her arts,
Her men and thoughts advance.

And backward to the grinning Sphinx
The trail of man, law, creed,
I watch far down the weed-grown past
Grow narrow and recede.

The gray Atlantic never bore
My buoyant heart along,
But up the inland valley drifts
A snatch of sailor song.

Ah, Fancy, Fancy!—faithful guide—
Time's key is in your keep
To scenes that in the distance hide,
And in the future sleep!

SUNSET ON THE FARM

There's a golden glimmer falling
On the orchard breast of green,
And a dying day is calling
All her glory to the scene—
All the sweetest notes of robins,
Every sight and sound of charm,
For the dew is on the meadow,
And it's sunset on the farm.

And the geese have hushed their gabble
Under breast and snowy wing,
And the noisy little rabble
Of the wood have ceased to sing;
But the brook, I hear it babble
Like a dream note in a storm,
For the dew is on the willow,
And it's sunset on the farm.

Now the lazy herd is huddled
On the meadow 'gainst the sky,
And a fleecy cloud is muddled
With the lambkins nosing by;
Earth is never far from heaven,
If we take away the harm,
When the dew is on the maple,
And it's sunset on the farm.

Deeper fall the shadows mellow,
In their cozy valley bed,
And the winds have brushed the yellow
Clouds into a robe of red,
And the day has wrapped it round her,
Like a pilgrim in a storm,
Sleeping through the dreams, and waiting
For the sunrise on the farm!

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